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Citation: Lower, Amanda Laurene (2020) Compliments and compliment responses on Facebook : a variational pragmatics comparison of young Quiteño and Andalusian men. [Thesis] (Unpublished)

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COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLIMENT RESPONSES ON FACEBOOK

A variational pragmatics comparison of young Quiteño and Andalusian men

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Thesis submitted to the University of London for the degree of PhD

WORD COUNT AND DECLARATION

Word count (exclusive of bibliography, glossary, and appendices): **97,433**

words. I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Amanda Lower
December 2019

ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes compliments and compliment responses among young men on Facebook from a variational pragmatics perspective. This intralingual study compares Ecuadorian (Quito) and Peninsular (Andalusia) Spanish, while controlling for macrosocial factors such as age, sex, and region. In past compliment literature, men have largely been ignored; this study aims to redress this imbalance.

This thesis provides the first comprehensive picture of how men behave in all aspects of complimenting and receiving compliments, including: the topics and syntactic patterns of compliments (including lexical elements used), rate of compliment responses and the forms they take, supportive elements used in compliments and compliment responses.

Contrary to expectations, both groups of men were found to give many compliments on a variety of topics, but with particular focus on appearance and ability, thus conforming to previous compliment studies involving women. Men often deployed simple syntactic patterns for realizing compliments, similar to past findings relating to women. Both groups of men gave compliments to each other on the subject of friendship, and Ecuadorian men particularly used implicit forms of compliments to realize those compliments. Spanish men also used implicit compliments frequently, but most often in relation to appearance.

In addition to offering a new perspective on compliment and compliment response studies (men), this study has developed a new methodology for collecting, storing, and coding online data. This methodology allows for handling the vast amounts of data available in online contexts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to thank my supervisor, Dr. María Elena Placencia, for her expertise, guidance, support, and patience throughout the process of researching and writing this thesis.

I also thank all of those young Ecuadorian men and women who volunteered to be participants in this study, and who gave me a window into their personal lives.

Finally, thank you to my family, whose support has been immense and unwavering. This would not have been possible without my brilliant husband, Ari, who has held my hand every step of the way; my beautiful daughters, Emilia and Sofia, who constantly motivated me to be a positive role model; my cats, Remus and Ranulph, and my dog, Ruby, who reminded (forced) me to take breaks to regroup and collect my thoughts.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The issue of focus in the current study

This study of compliments and compliment responses between young men from Ecuador (Quito) and Spain (Andalusia) through the lens of variational pragmatics fills the current gap in compliment studies in which men have received little to no attention. Men have been routinely dismissed in compliment studies, with the view that men rarely give and receive compliments, and that when they do, those compliments focus on abilities, rather than appearance, a compliment topic shown to be the most frequently given in studies examining compliments in relation to females. The current study shows that previously held ideas about male, specifically male-male compliment behavior, are largely incorrect. In addition to redressing the sex imbalance in compliment research, this study provides a new methodological approach to compliment research conducted online, specifically on the social networking site (SNS) of Facebook (FB).

1.2 Background to the current gap in compliment studies

Compliments and compliment responses have been widely studied across various branches of linguistics, including: pragmatics (Placencia and Yépez Lasso, 1999; Lorenzo-Dus, 2001); applied linguistics (Qanbar, 2012; Farghal, 2006); sociolinguistics (Wolfson, 1983; Herbert, 1990); historical pragmatics (Jucker, Schneider, Taavitsainen, and Breustedt, 2008); conversational analysis (Pomerantz, 1978; Golato, 2001), for several decades. Not only do compliment

studies span several branches of linguistics, but a variety of languages as well, both in the context of inter and intra language comparisons, including: American English (AmE) (Wolfson and Manes, 1980); Spanish (Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez, 2013); German (Golato, 2002, 2003); Arabic (Migdadi, 2003); Chinese (Lee, 2009); Japanese (Adachi, 2010); and Korean (Choi, 2008), among others.

Early compliment studies were conducted via field research methods, i.e., data was collected from face-to-face interactions (see Jucker, 2009). As compliment studies widened in scope, researchers turned to laboratory methods, for instance discourse completion tests (DCTs) to gather data for study. As technology has advanced, so have researchers in using new research methodologies, including tools such as e-DCTs (see Mack and Sykes, 2009) and extracting compliment data from online sources, such as social networking sites (SNS) (see Cirillo 2012; Placencia and Lower, 2013).

Modern compliment studies are primarily motivated by the work of Nessa Wolfson and Joan Manes (Wolfson and Manes, 1980; Wolfson, 1981; Manes, 1983), conducted in the early 1980's and focusing on AmE. Wolfson and Manes (1980), conducting their research via field notes and deploying a range of research assistants to collect data, found compliments to be highly formulaic both in terms of the topics of compliments and the syntactic patterns selected by speakers to realize those compliments. Studies on compliment responses largely build on work by Anita Pomerantz (1978), who highlighted how compliment responses are governed by a series of constraints, which means that responses frequently do not conform to the preferred response of acceptance.

The work of Wolfson and Manes in compliment research sparked an interest in the area that has yet to wane. Scholars like Robert Herbert and Janet

Holmes, building on the work of Wolfson and Manes, are major contributors to compliment studies, particularly their respective works on compliment responses. Each of these researchers has developed a taxonomy for classifying compliment responses, influenced by Pomerantz (1978) (see Herbert, 1986 and Holmes, 1986), and these taxonomies are still used today, though with some modifications, particularly with respect to studies of compliments in online environments.

Based on the prevalence of compliment studies, and the fact that compliment studies span the globe encompassing a variety of languages and cultures, it would seem that people throughout the world know how to give and receive compliments, at least within their own cultural context. This speech act is so commonplace that it is typically easy to give and to recognize when you are the recipient of a compliment. Despite this, it is useful to define compliments, as this gives, at the very least, clear parameters with which to conduct research. For the current study, I have turned to Holmes (1986) and am using her definition of a compliment as my starting framework. Holmes (1986:485) broadly defines a compliment as:

[...] a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some “good” (possession, characteristic, skill, etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer.

Holmes’s definition is clear and straightforward, yet flexible enough so that it encompasses a wide variety of scenarios, including those in which one

would typically expect a compliment to appear, and those where the occurrence of compliments may be unexpected. This definition also accommodates compliments that are not formulaic and more abstract in nature, and captures the key features of compliments, specifically, a positive evaluation that is understood to be positive by both the giver and the recipient. For these reasons, I have selected it as my working definition of a compliment for the current study.

Despite their seemingly global ubiquity, compliments appear to be something that people do not actively consider when interacting. It is precisely this reason, I feel, that compliments are so widely studied: they are something almost automatic, a speech act that people learn from a very early age, including how to formulate them and the various contexts in which they are appropriate (see Herbert, 1986:84). Compliments are sometimes only conspicuous by their absence: we do not notice them when they are humming along in the background, performing their oft-cited social function of greasing the social wheels (Wolfson, 1983:89). A further function of compliments is to maintain social bonds and solidarity (Holmes, 1988). It is interesting that compliments perform such important social functions, yet they are something that friends and family typically do without thinking, and in a wide variety of scenarios.

Compliment studies have been approached from various methodological perspectives, but the majority focus on observed face-to-face interactions, or imagined interactions produced via DCTs or role plays (see Jucker, 2009). Technology has advanced significantly since the early 1980's when compliment studies started to gain popularity; particularly of note is the use of personal computers, mobile telephones, and perhaps most importantly for the current study, the Internet and social media. With the rise in popularity in the Internet,

people have increased the amount of time they spend using it, which includes computer-mediated social interactions, specifically via SNSs such as FB.

Although there is an immense body of research on compliments and compliment responses, the bulk of this research focuses on women, and how women perform the majority of compliment behavior, both giving and receiving. Of the few compliment studies that include men, the focus in such instances tends to be how men compliment women, or how women respond to compliments from men. Compliment studies that include men typically only do so in order to evaluate how women react to, and give compliments towards, men, and tend not to focus on male-male compliment behavior as it occurs infrequently (see Holmes, 1988; Wolfson, 1983).

Within the last decade, compliment researchers have begun to turn to SNSs to conduct their research, accessing data on a variety of platforms, including Second Life (Cirillo, 2012), Twitter (Siti Yuhaida and Tan, 2014), and FB (Placencia and Lower, 2013). However, as with studies of compliments in face-to-face settings or data created by DCTs, compliment studies using data collected online focus most heavily on female behavior. Even when males are included, there is no specific focus and limited discussion of male-male behavior (see Maíz-Arévalo, 2013).

It is therefore clear that there are two significant gaps in compliment research: male-male compliment behavior in general and, as researchers have branched out into studying compliments on SNS in order to keep pace with evolving methods of communication, male-male compliment behavior on SNSs. If the current body of literature is to be believed, this gap is miniscule and not particularly interesting. The fact remains, however, that there is very little

research on male-male compliment behavior, whether in face-to-face settings or in SNSs. The few studies that have taken a meaningful look at male-male compliment behavior concluded that when men do compliment other men, it is within a goal-oriented context (Rees-Miller, 2011) and focusing on ability (Parisi and Wogan, 2006).

1.3 Background to the current gap in compliment research methodology

Apart from the large gap in compliment studies that is the examination of male-male complimenting behavior, there is a second sort of gap in the current landscape of compliment studies that the current study aims to remedy, and that is the lack of a clear methodological procedure when approaching compliment studies. Chapter 3 gives a thorough overview of methodologies in compliment research, and describes the research design and analytical approach adopted in the current study, including making difficult decisions with respect to classifying and coding data that did not fit neatly into one place.

The high levels of engagement of people almost worldwide on SNSs means that these sites have the potential to provide a large and diverse pool of data for researchers. The vast quantity of data available to researchers via SNSs can cause methodological issues for researchers, not least of which is how to limit data to manageable levels. Hine (2009:2) argues that deciding where to start and stop an Internet-based study depends on the analytic direction in which the researcher believes the study should travel. Ultimately, researchers should abandon preconceived notions of appropriate boundaries in Internet research and engage with the situations that are encountered in the course of their investigations (2009:3).

Apart from the exploratory study that I conducted with Placencia (2013), research methodologies in compliment studies conducted on SNSs have been unclear in terms of how participants are selected, how the compliments under examination have been selected, and how the data is managed. Additionally, while researchers have been clear to an extent in terms of classifying elements of compliments such as topics and taxonomies for compliment responses, there has so far been very little visibility in how grammatically incorrect compliments have been dealt with, for example, and no discussion as to how to handle compliments exchanged on SNSs that fit into multiple topics of compliments, or multiple syntactic patterns. Researchers so far have not treated features specific to online compliments, for example emoticons and features such as 'like' on FB, in a consistent manner.

Compliment studies conducted "offline" using more established research methodologies such as field observation and DCTs are naturally limited, whether by availability of participants, or time constraints when collecting data. This is not the case with data on SNSs, which is seemingly infinite. In this current study, I am contributing a more concrete and comprehensive method for approaching online data collection and management. This method is a variation of the participant-observer method in that in order to gain access to the data in the current study, I joined the participants' cohorts of FB friends, thereby making myself a potential participant in that I could then interact with the participants via their FB profiles, and but more importantly, I could observe the participants' interactions with their other FB friends. In many ways, an online participant-observer is more ideal than one operating in a face-to-face context because the online participant-observer is not visible unless she makes herself visible by

interacting on SNSs, and the online participant-observer can observe research participants as they would typically behave in social situations. The risk of the observer's paradox (see Labov, 1972: 209) becomes negligible, which adds to the reliability of the data. Conversely, because a researcher is only virtually involved with participants, it can be more difficult to achieve in-group status (see Chapter 3).

1.4 The current study

The goals of the current study, therefore, are twofold: first, to conduct a comparative study from a variational pragmatics (Schneider and Barron, 2008) perspective into how groups of men from two different geographical locations (Quito, Ecuador, and Andalusia, Spain), using different varieties of the same language (Quiteño and Andalusian Spanish), give and receive compliments, and second, to establish a clear methodology that can be easily reproduced for future compliment studies.

Studies on regional variation (cf. Schneider & Placencia, 2017; Placencia, 2011) have found that speakers of pluricentric languages, such as Spanish, do not necessarily use the same pragmatic strategies to realize different speech actions. When it comes to compliments, there are only a few studies that adopt this perspective (see Chapter 2); however, to my knowledge, there are no studies that look at compliment and compliment response behavior on social media across two regional varieties of Spanish (or other languages). The research questions for the current study are as follows:

- 1) do young Ecuadorian and Spanish men give each other compliments, and if so, what topics do these groups of men favor?

2) when a young Ecuadorian or Spanish man receives a compliment from another man on FB, does he respond to the compliment, and if so, how?

Finally, the current study compares and contrasts behavior of young Ecuadorian and Spanish men surrounding compliments and responses on FB.

The methodology that I have used in the current study is an improvement on the methodology that I created for Placencia and Lower (2013). For the current study, I have had a computer program developed, which collects data from FB and uses it to populate a custom-built database. This database enables a researcher to view comments on FB within their original context, meaning that the photo that attracted a comment is included in each database entry, along with all information pertaining to comments, including the names and locations of those commenting, as well as dates and times of comments and any edited comments. This gives a researcher, who is not a genuine part of the participant's social circle, as clear and comprehensive a view as possible into comments, which allows for increased understanding.

Building on past studies of compliments that have been conducted with varying methodologies, both in face-to-face contexts and in online environments, I have created a framework for the current study that enables a full accounting of not only the text of the compliment, but also any clues surrounding the compliment which aid in interpretation, including any accompanying supportive moves, follow up comments, and affordances of SNSs, particularly the 'like' function on FB.

What emerges from the current study is the first meaningful picture of how young men from Ecuador and Spain give compliments to, and receive compliments from, other men on FB. The results of the current study are

contrary to expectations of male complimenting behavior in a number of ways. The most important finding is that men frequently give each other compliments, followed closely by the finding that the most typical topic of compliment exchanged between men is physical appearance. There are some caveats to this finding, particularly with respect to the Ecuadorian participants, which will be discussed at length in Chapter 4. This finding is important because it is completely contrary to previous studies on compliments, which have largely ignored compliments among men because they do not occur much, and when compliments do occur between men, those compliments relate to abilities or possessions.

That is not to say that all of the results in the current study are completely new. For example, it is not a new phenomenon that the majority of compliments observed pertain to appearance; this has been the case with nearly every other study that has been conducted on compliments, both in face-to-face contexts and in SNSs, such as FB (see Maíz-Arévalo and García-Gómez, 2013). What is new is that while like women, men behave in a formulaic manner in some aspects of giving and receiving compliments, Ecuadorian and Spanish men are less formulaic overall in their complimenting behavior than women have been found to be.

Previous studies, starting with Manes and Wolfson (1981), have shown compliment behavior to be highly formulaic in practically all aspects: topic, syntactic form, and the range of adjectives used to express compliments. The current study has validated some of the findings of compliment studies among women, and shown that some of the other findings do not pertain to Ecuadorian and Spanish men. The results of the current study also show that while the two

groups of participants share many aspects of compliment behavior, they differ on other key aspects, particularly in their choices of adjectives and their use of supportive moves with compliments and compliment responses.

1.5 Limitations of the current study

The current study is comprehensive in that it takes a full account of compliment and compliment response behavior as displayed by the Ecuadorian and Spanish participants and their male friends on FB. Despite the extensive analysis undertaken here, the current study is not without limitations. The first limitation is that the current study is limited to a snapshot in time of a fairly small group of men, in two relatively restricted geographical locations: Quito, Ecuador and Andalusia, Spain. Additionally, the participants have been selected by a mixture of self-identifying as being from the desired geographical area, and targeted by me, the researcher. I have had to rely on the participants' word and what they have shown me to make decisions as to whether their participation was appropriate, i.e., whether the participants were from the desired location and whether the participants fell within the desired age range (18-26) (see Chapter 3 for a discussion of managing the study participants).

A further limitation of this study is that I have relied solely on what was posted on FB to draw my data and make conclusions. I have not conducted follow up interviews to try to understand the motivations for compliments, responses, word choice, or use of supportive moves. This was a deliberate decision; the focus of the current study is about what the men in the study actually do in practice. Interviews are useful and shed a good deal of light into why people behave in particular ways, but this can be a double-edged sword:

instead of giving a neutral view of what actually happens, the picture becomes tinted by what people's personal opinions of what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior (see Placencia, Lower, and Powell 2016).

Finally, although the focus of the current study is on young men in Ecuador and Spain, it would have been useful to do a larger comparison with women from the same geographical areas that were of the same age group. As discussed fully in Chapter 3, the current study initially intended to focus on both women and men in order to provide a comprehensive picture of the similarities and differences in compliment and compliment response behavior among Ecuadorian and Spanish men and women. It became very clear that all of this would not be possible within the context of one doctoral thesis, not least because of space constraints. It would be impossible to focus on all aspects of compliments and compliment responses as I wished to do without sacrificing the quality substantially. That said, all data from the Ecuadorian and Spanish female participants has been coded and stored, and I intend to write a follow up study at a later date.

1.6 Organization of the current study

The current study begins with a literature review discussing studies on compliments and compliment responses, with particular focus on those studies that examine Spanish, typically on its own (e.g., Placencia and Yépez Lasso, 1999), but also those which contrast Spanish with English (e.g., Maíz-Arévalo and García-Gómez, 2013; Lorenzo-Dus 2001), and particularly on those that compare different varieties of Spanish (Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez, 2013) (Chapter 2). Chapter 3 first provides a critical overview of research methodologies used in

compliment studies, followed by the methodology that I developed for the current study, as well as comments on data coding difficulties unique to naturally occurring data on FB. Chapter 4 provides the results of the Ecuadorian male data, examining every aspect of compliments and compliment responses, while Chapter 5 does the same thing for the Spanish male data. Chapter 6 consists of a comparative analysis of the results of the compliment data for the two groups of participants, going into detail as to how the results of the two groups are similar and where they diverge, as well as comparing the current study results to those of previous studies where relevant, and suggesting possible reasons for the differences. Chapter 7 consists of a similar exercise to that in Chapter 6, this time relating to compliment responses. Chapter 8 is the conclusion of the study, which reiterates its results and importance, as well as suggesting future directions for research, based on the data examined in the present study, and using the data collected that remains unused, i.e., data on female compliment behavior on FB.

Examples from the corpora are included throughout, and have been reproduced identically to their original form, and often include misspelled words, grammatically incorrect utterances, and often lack proper punctuation, to name but a few difficulties.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Compliments have been a popular topic of study across various branches of linguistics, including sociolinguistics (cf. Adachi, 2011), second language acquisition (cf. Cheng, 2011), cross-cultural pragmatics (cf. Herbert, 1989), historical pragmatics (cf. Taavitsainen and Jucker, 2008), and variational pragmatics (cf. Schneider and Barron, 2008), which is the perspective adopted in the current study. This interest in compliments was largely sparked by Wolfson and Manes's studies of compliments (1980, 1981), and has grown and developed steadily since. Compliment studies were principally focused first on the English language at first, the most notable and perhaps groundbreaking of these studies were those of Joan Manes and Nessa Wolfson on American English (AmE) (Wolfson and Manes 1980; Manes and Wolfson 1981, 1983; Manes 1983; Wolfson 1983). The work of Manes and Wolfson generated such an impact that many ensuing studies root themselves in the research of these scholars.

Subsequent studies on compliments corroborated some features observed in Manes and Wolfson's research, while others built on the foundation laid by them to explore more deeply other aspects of compliments, focusing on such aspects as: the role played by the sex of speakers in giving and receiving compliments (cf. Holmes 1988; Herbert 1990), and cultural differences in giving compliments (cf. Wolfson 1989; Herbert, 1989, 1997). Further study was also done on compliment responses (cf. Herbert, 1986; Holmes, 1986; Valdés and Pino, 1981).

Manes and Wolfson (1981) focused on compliment studies in AmE, while ensuing studies branched out to cover other varieties of English such as South African (Herbert 1990) and New Zealand (Holmes 1986) English and a variety of other languages, sometimes with a single-language focus (cf. Mursy and Wilson, 2001; Lee, 2009).

There are many contrastive studies on compliments that compare some variety of English with another language (cf. Daikuhara, 1986; Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, 1989). Indeed, many of these comparison studies often use Manes and Wolfson's AmE-based work as their point of reference (cf. Jaworski, 1995). This tendency may be attributable to the clear framework of analysis provided by Manes and Wolfson (1981:116), as well as the fact that Manes and Wolfson covered a large range of aspects related to compliments, including topics of compliments, social and discourse functions, and syntactic and semantic structures.

The current study examines compliments from a variational pragmatics perspective, which describes differences in language use by taking into account macro and micro social factors, those here being sex (male), geographic location (Quito, Ecuador versus Andalucia, Spain), and age (18-25). Before providing a detailed literature review (Sections 2.3 and 2.4), definitions of compliments are considered, including the definition adopted in the present study (Section 2.2).

2.2 Defining compliments

Wolfson (1983: 85) defines a compliment as a "spontaneous expression of admiration and/or approval" relating to some aspect of the complimentee's appearance, possessions, or skills, while Holmes, (1988: 446) defines a

compliment as a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone another than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some "good" (e.g., possessions, characteristic, skill etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer. While Holmes's definition is suitably broad and lends itself to interpretation, it is not flexible enough to accommodate instances of self-praise such as those observed in the current study of a 'speaker' complimenting himself via social media (see Chapters 4 and 5). That said, self-praise is a separate speech act than compliments (cf. Dayter, 2018), and is not discussed in detail here with respect to compliments. However, self-praise surfaces in relation to compliment responses by Ecuadorian men, in the form of compliment upgrades (see Chapters 4 and 7). Compliment upgrades are also discussed by Lorenzo-Dus (2001) (see Section 2.4.2).

Holmes's definition stands out in comparison to previous ones because it highlights the idea that a compliment is not only oriented towards the speaker but is derived from a value shared by both the speaker and the listener. This implies that the act of complimenting is not limited to conventional expressions, but that the speaker and hearers understand it as a positively motivated phrase. However, complimenting occurs within a specific cultural context, and in order to fully understand the meaning of a compliment, the values of the society in which it is situated should be taken into account (see, for example, Lee's 2009 study of compliments occurring during Chinese New Year's celebrations).

Manes (1983) speculates that by studying speech acts, we gain insight into the norms and values of a given society (96). She views compliments as particularly interesting and useful because they are by nature evaluations of another person. Again, this seems to apply very clearly to face-to-face

interactions, but I am not completely convinced that this description applies wholly to interactions on social networks. Interactions on social networking sites, particularly FB, are largely photograph-based and asynchronous, giving users to think about and consider their interactions, making comments and compliments on photos less spontaneous than in face-to-face communication. It is becoming increasingly clear that, while at first blush, interactions in an online context closely resemble face-to-face interactions; they exist on a slightly altered plane where the same people and ideas exist, but in a detached, asynchronous environment. Rules for face-to-face interactions cannot be mapped onto digital, asynchronous interactions without alteration, given that the rules of engagement are not identical.

As stated by Holmes (1988), to give a compliment to someone is mainly to express a favorable opinion, judgment, or evaluation. For this type of utterance on SNSs to emulate a face-to-face compliment, the content of the online utterance should refer to "something" of the listener, which can be valued, and the speaker and the listener must share such a valuation. Holmes (1988: 455) suggests that compliments mostly deal with a limited number of items: appearance, ability, possessions or some other aspect of one's personality (see Chapter 3.5.3 for a list and a brief explanation of the categories of compliments used in this study). Complimenting on SNSs is not limited to conventional topics, such as appearance; although the definitions given here do not specify compliments on the topic of friendship, it occurred frequently in the current study nevertheless. A compliment on friendship clearly fits within Holmes's definition of compliments, because it can be a value shared by both the speaker and the hearer. Compliments and responses to those compliments in the current

study demonstrate this (see Chapters 4, 5, and 6 for further discussion of compliments on friendship).

I view compliments on SNSs as speech acts that fall under the larger umbrella of phatic communication. The first use of the term phatic communication is widely attributed to Malinowski (1923:10) and was defined by him as “language used in free, aimless, social intercourse” (p. 9). It is “a type of speech in which ties of union are created by a mere exchange of words,” the purpose of such speech having no clear aim (p. 9-10). He argues that small talk, unlike other kinds of communication, is deprived of context and can be understood independently of any context (p. 9). I think that on the contrary, the meaning of some forms of small talk, such as compliments, are hugely dependent on knowledge of the context in which it occurs, as I argue throughout the current study. A frequent criticism that I level at other work on compliments and compliment responses is that the studies are presented without context, which does little to aid in interpreting and understanding the meaning behind the utterances.

Malinowski assumed that the need for the presence of others is a fundamental aspect of human nature, and speech can be viewed as the “intimate correlate of this tendency.” (1923:9) Despite viewing this type of talk, also sometimes called small talk, as largely unimportant, Malinowski recognizes that phatic communication can serve to form bonds between people. As I discuss in Chapter 4, SNSs brings people together virtually, so they are not gaining “traditional” companionship from interacting on SNSs but may be gaining a form of “virtual companionship”. Malinowski lists gossip, comments on the weather, and inquiries about health as examples of phatic talk, and noted a preference in

phatic talk for affirmation and consent, which is essentially what compliments prototypically are: an affirmation of the good of the receiver (p. 9)¹.

After Malinowski, several authors took up the subject of phatic communion, also referred to as phatic communication although a dismissive attitude towards it remained. A useful overview is provided by Coupland, Coupland, and Robinson (1992:208-212), and is summarized here. Phatic communication has largely been determined as communicatively insignificant, and the words used matter very little. Hudson (1980:109) described phatic communion as “the kind of chit-chat that people engage in simply in order to show that they recognize each other’s presence.” Turner (1973) viewed phatic communion as semantically empty, and that all speech designed more to accommodate and acknowledge a speaker, rather than convey a message, should be designated as ‘phatic language.’ Scollon (1985:26) put forward the machine metaphor for human communication, which is that the machine must be “humming” for people to believe that it has not broken down. According to McCarthy (2000), sharing a space with others brings about the need to engage in small talk or phatic exchanges. Drew and Chilton (2000) suggest that people also need to construct a co-presence with others by making contact through small talk over distances, for example, by phoning friends and relatives in order to “keep in touch” (p. 137). This certainly seems to be the case in social media: users are not sharing a physical space, such as waiting for a bus with strangers at a bus stop, but rather a virtual space that they have presumably chosen to occupy with other people of their choice, thereby reducing the immediate need

¹ Compliments are typically affirmations of the good of the receiver. That said, there are some instances of compliments being used in an instrumental fashion, as in cases of online grooming. See Lorenzo-Dus et. al. (2016) for a discussion of an alternative use of compliments.

to engage in small talk that exists when sharing physical spaces with strangers or acquaintances. However, as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, FB users appear to engage in a great deal of phatic communication, despite a lack of physical co-presence, which reinforces the idea that physical immediacy is only one instigator of phatic communication, and not a required element.

Laver (1974, 1975, 1981) viewed phatic communication favorably, focusing his analysis on the positive, relational value of this type of communication. Laver suggests that phatic communication has three major functions: a propitiatory or emollient function through opening phrases which diffuse possible attributions of hostility from silence; an exploratory function through the often tentative nature of phatic exchanges; and an initiatory function of starting an interaction. According to Laver, the main goals of phatic exchanges are to maintain relationships and achieve transition, which places both explicit and implicit compliments firmly within this type of exchange. Laver speculated that speakers are able to stake claims about solidarity or intimacy by using particular encoding choices when engaging in phatic communication.

Coupland et al. (1992) argue that phatic communication can also be perceived in a way similar to viewing compliments as a face-threatening act. They argue that the exploratory function of phatic communication allows speakers to probe for information in a way that seems innocent and mundane (p. 217). This view is in contrast with earlier views of phatic communication, such as Malinowski (1923), which attribute little sophistication and ulterior motives to this kind of communication.

In the next section (Section 2.3), I examine past studies of compliments, focusing first on studies of explicit compliments and implicit compliments,

primarily based in the English language (Section 2.3.1). Next, I discuss compliment studies in different varieties of Spanish (Section 2.3.2), followed by compliment studies on social networking sites (Section 2.3.3). The second half of this chapter focuses on compliment response literature (Section 2.4), following the same format as the first half: face-to-face compliment response studies, primarily in English (Section 2.4.1), compliment response studies in Spanish (Section 2.4.2), and finally, compliment response studies on social networking sites (Section 2.4.3).

2.3 Studies of compliments

2.3.1 Seminal background studies

I begin this section with the background pieces that make up the foundation of most compliment studies today, focusing on those most relevant to the current study. These are the influential works by Manes and Wolfson (Wolfson and Manes, 1980; Manes and Wolfson, 1981; Wolfson, 1981(a), 1981(b), 1990; and Manes, 1983), Herbert (1990), and Holmes (1988). Most compliment studies root their research in the work of these scholars, and the current study is no different.

These background studies are divided into three sections: the first deals with explicit compliments (2.3.1.1), followed by a consideration of implicit compliments (2.3.1.2), while the third section focuses on the setting in which compliments take place—how the setting in which compliments are studied impacts the results of the study.

2.3.1.1 Explicit compliments

2.3.1.1.1 Wolfson and Manes

In the various works by Joan Manes and Nessa Wolfson (Wolfson and Manes, 1980; Manes and Wolfson, 1981; Wolfson, 1981(a), 1981(b), 1990; and Manes, 1983), the authors observed that compliments in AmE are largely formulaic in nature, meaning that compliments follow a few set patterns and are not very linguistically diverse. Manes and Wolfson (1981) adopted an ethnographic approach, using participant observation (see Chapter 3 for a full discussion of various methodologies) in order to collect data on everyday speech examples. Approximately 80 percent of compliments recorded in Manes and Wolfson's (1981) corpus were adjectival compliments; that is, the word in the compliment that carries the semantic load is an adjective, as in "*Your apartment's nice*" (Manes and Wolfson, 1981:117).

The authors note that, despite observing the use of 72 different adjectives in their study, a significant proportion of the compliments examined (22.9%) used only two adjectives: *nice* or *good* (p. 116). These adjectives, furthermore, are fairly weak in terms of their positive evaluation; Manes and Wolfson did observe some examples of more emphatically positive adjectives (such as *gorgeous* or *stupendous*), but the use of these stronger adjectives did not occur with any regularity (p. 117). Only three additional adjectives, *beautiful*, *pretty*, and *great*, appeared in more than five percent of the adjectival compliments.

While the majority of compliments in Manes and Wolfson's (1981) study occur through semantically positive adjectives, a significant number (16%) use semantically positive verbs in order to effectuate a compliment (p. 118). Some

examples observed by the authors include: "*I like your haircut*" and "*I love your glasses*" (p. 118). There was even less variation in the use of positive verbs than that of adjectives. Only two verbs, *like* and *love* were used in the majority (86%) of instances. Other verbs in Manes and Wolfson's (1981) study occur only once or twice (p. 118). These findings demonstrate a high degree of formulaicity, that is, relying on a few formulations to convey a positive message.

The remaining four percent of compliments in Manes and Wolfson's (1981) study were realized by either a verb accompanied by an intensifier, such as *really* ('*Your talk was the one that really went over*'), or with the positive semantic load carried by an adverb or noun ('*You really handled that situation well*') (p. 118).

Manes and Wolfson put forward various syntactic formulas to represent the forms of compliments observed in their study. The following three formulae represented 85% of all compliments in their corpus:

NP [is/looks] (really) ADJ (for example, '*Your hair looks nice*')

I (really) [like/love] NP (for example, '*I love your hair*')

PRO is (really) (a) ADJ NP (for example, '*This was really a great meal*')

The authors observe several other formulae, but the three listed above occurred in the majority of compliments, demonstrating a lack of creativity in the way that speakers of AmE give compliments. Manes and Wolfson also noted that only nine formulae in total accounted for 97% of all compliments in their corpus.

According to Manes and Wolfson (1981), socio-economic values are reflected and reinforced by the topics of compliments. Examples of this are compliments about a new or recently acquired material objects. Manes and Wolfson (1981) highlight that, despite the fact that the adjective "new" does not

contain any positive value in itself, desirability is reflected in the compliments when something new forms the basis of the compliment. Once the interlocutor notices something new of the listener, it is often given a favorable review, and the omission of a compliment in such situations can be interpreted as rejection or disapproval of the object, or even an insult. Wolfson (1981b) believes that Americans reject the suggestion that something is appreciated simply for being new. However, analysis of her data suggests it was indeed true, at least for white, middle-class Americans at the time that Wolfson collected her data, which demonstrated that new material possessions regularly received compliments and were valued positively solely due to their newness.

In order to explain the homogeneity of compliments in AmE, Manes and Wolfson suggest that the function of compliments is to create and/or reinforce solidarity between people. If the intended compliment is misunderstood, the compliment fails to achieve its objective of creating or reinforcing solidarity. Therefore, in order to avoid any confusion, Manes and Wolfson suggest that compliments in AmE are largely formulaic, easily achieving their purpose of solidarity building.

According to Wolfson (1983), while there are a variety of possible compliment topics in AmE, most compliments that she observed related to some aspect of the hearer's appearance, the majority pertaining to the hearer's clothing or hairstyle. Wolfson further noted that, apart from appearance, compliments related to some aspect of the hearer's abilities. Table 2.1 below lists a number of topics of compliments as observed by Wolfson (1983).

Table 2. 1 Categorization of topics of compliments in AmE (adapted from Wolfson, 1983)

Topics	Appearance	Clothing Personal appearance Houses, furniture and cars Another type of belongings	
		Attractive children (or the family members and friends)	
	Ability	General	Skills Talent Personal qualities Taste
		A well-done specific act	

Other studies yielded similar results: compliments largely related to either appearance or ability (cf. Holmes, 1988, but see Herbert, 1997, who noted that the most frequent topic of compliments in Polish related to possessions)

2.3.1.1.2 Holmes

Janet Holmes is another major contributor to early studies on compliments, building on work by Manes and Wolfson (1981), and focusing primarily on compliments in New Zealand English (NZE). In addition to examining forms of compliments and their responses, Holmes (1988) also studied the way compliments are used by different sociocultural groups. In her 1988 study Holmes examines the different ways in which males and females use compliments. She suggests that while females generally view the function of compliments as a positive speech act, men view compliments as face threatening acts. Holmes suggests that compliments can fulfill various functions, depending on the context in which they are deployed: they can grease the social wheels by paying attention to a person's positive face wants and thereby strengthening solidarity between people, they can be used as positive politeness strategies in

the context of face threatening acts, and compliments can be face-threatening acts themselves, for example, in situations where complimenting another's possessions can be interpreted as envy.

As seen in studies of compliments in AmE, Holmes observed that compliments in NZE are largely formulaic and follow the same patterns as those observed in AmE. Additionally, as is the case with AmE, females are typically the ones who give compliments in NZE, with compliments on appearance exchanged more frequently between females than between males (1988:455). Male speakers of NZE tend to compliment each other more on possessions, which can be perceived as a face-threatening act (p. 455) (see Chapters 4 and 5, below, for a discussion of how the men in the present study complimented each other). Holmes points out that the fact that females compliment more frequently on appearance demonstrates that female speakers of NZE use compliments for their positive functions. This may indicate that male speakers of NZE do not use compliments to display positive politeness, but instead as a form of dominance, a rather different strategy from female speakers of NZE. Holmes (1988) also points out that men may regard compliments as embarrassing or uncomfortable, and even an inappropriate way of expressing solidarity (p. 452). When Holmes accounted for the status of participants in compliment exchanges, she found that both males and females mostly gave compliments to those of equal status. However, she also found that high status females were more likely to receive compliments than high status males. Holmes attributes this to the idea that compliments to higher status males may be perceived as face-threatening acts.

2.3.1.1.3 Herbert

Robert K. Herbert is another important scholar in early compliment research, focusing on compliments in AmE, South African English (SAE) and Polish. Herbert's (1990) study on sex-based differences in compliments in AmE treats compliments as part of a speech act that has the structure of an adjacency pair (Schegloff and Sacks 1973), with the following general structure:

A compliments B

B responds/acknowledges that A has spoken

Herbert points out that, despite both compliments and responses forming one linked structure, his contemporaries (Holmes, Manes, and Wolfson) treat them as existing independently of each other (p. 202). He argues that the compliment cannot be understood without considering the entire compliment event. While this is certainly true for face-to-face exchanges—verbal compliments followed by compliment responses—it does not necessarily apply to compliments appearing on SNS: as demonstrated by Placencia et al., (2016, discussed below), the majority of compliments on SNS can exist on their own, that is, without an explicit response to the compliment. However, the structure of SNSS appears to have led to the development of a different adjacency pair where the first part is constituted by the photograph that elicits the production of the second part, a compliment (see also Placencia and Lower, 2013). The parts of an adjacency pair shift slightly from compliment followed by response to a posted photograph followed by a compliment, with an optional third part consisting of a written response, a FB-specific 'like', or a combination of the two:

'A' posts a photograph to social media

'B' compliments 'A' on some aspect of the photograph

'A' most likely will not respond, and/or may 'like' the compliment

Herbert (1990) argues that compliments are not exclusive in their function of negotiating solidarity; compliment responses serve this function as well by returning the complimenter's offer of solidarity (1990: 211). When responding to a compliment, the recipient affirms solidarity by agreeing with the compliment or avoiding self-praise, which attributes higher status to the person making the compliment (p. 211). Herbert refers to Brown and Levinson's (1978) Balance Principle: a compliment leaves the recipient in the speaker's debt and responding to the compliment balances the interaction (p. 212).

The main focus of Herbert's (1990) study of compliments and compliment responses in AmE is the differences in behavior between men and women. Herbert bases his analysis on Manes and Wolfson's (1981) findings in AmE. Of particular note is Herbert's discussion of Manes and Wolfson's (1981), and later Holmes's (1988) findings about the heavily reliance on only a few syntactic patterns for expressing compliments. As above, the most common syntactic pattern for compliments as found by Manes and Wolfson (1981) and Holmes (1988) is:

NP is/looks (really) ADJ

This finding seems pretty straightforward; it is a simple sentence yet gives room for some lexical flexibility. Herbert (1990), however, found that the syntactic pattern presented in such a simple format is not adequate to highlight differences in usage, particularly between men and women (p. 203). He argues that this pattern can be expressed in first person, second person, and third person (i.e., as an impersonal form), and that pattern preferences vary according to the sex of the person giving and the person receiving the compliment (p. 203).

Herbert asserts that while examining the pattern is interesting, it may be more useful to take into account where the focus of the compliment lies² (p. 203). In order to more clearly demonstrate this idea, Herbert gives the following example of a compliment, with the focus being slightly different in each iteration (p. 203):

First person: I like your hair that way.

Second person: Your hair looks good short.

Third person: Nice haircut.

Herbert points to literature on sex-differentiating language behavior to suggest that women use language that is more personally focused, while men use language that is more impersonal (p. 204). This is borne out in the results of Herbert's 1990 study of compliments and responses in AmE: the majority of male-male compliments use a third person form (68%), while the majority of female-female compliments are expressed in first person (p. 205). The pattern continued for male-female compliments in which the majority of compliments were expressed in the third person, and female-male compliments were typically in a first-person form (p. 205). Males seldom used a first-person formulation to give a compliment to other males, while compliments from females to other females in the third person did not occur often (p. 205).

Herbert's (1990) study is important because it is one of the few to focus on sex differences; many studies focus on female complimenting behavior because it is easier to observe. Also of note in Herbert's (1990) study is that the data are comprised of approximately equal numbers of examples in each pairing,

² See Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) notion of "perspective".

rather than many examples of female-female compliments and few examples of other pairings (p. 203).

2.3.1.2 Implicit compliments

In contrast with explicit compliments, which are recognizable as compliments outside of the context in which they occur and are carried out by a small set of conventional structures (Herbert 1997:488), implicit compliments are those in which the value judgment in the compliment is presupposed and/or implicated by Gricean maxims (p. 488). Herbert suggests that it is wise to distinguish between compliments and other statements of praise by restricting the definition of compliments to those in which the subject of praise is directly related to the recipient, or pertaining to a quality or person “more or less closely related to the addressee.” (p. 488) This however is problematic when attempting to distinguish what is “more or less closely related to the addressee”, as this is a subjective judgment, and depends largely on contextual information (see Chapter 3, for a discussion of coding compliments about non-study participants). Therefore, it may not always be possible to determine whether a statement is a compliment or not without the relevant contextual background.

2.3.1.2.1 Boyle

Boyle (2000) picks up Herbert’s (1997) note that implicit compliments have not received scholarly attention, pointing out that researchers have adopted a narrow view of the phatic function of compliments, and have only collected explicit compliments. Although he does not state it, Boyle (2000) implies that implicit compliments are a kind of phatic talk. Boyle also argues that

implicit compliments have not been largely studied because popular research methods, such as observation, questionnaires, or role-plays, are not well suited to detecting them. He argues that audio and video recording of naturally occurring talk will produce a broader picture of compliments. Boyle's comments predate the development of SNSs, which are currently an important source of naturally occurring interaction. I suggest, based on my own research presented here, that implicit, and indeed explicit, compliments and other iterations of phatic communication can easily be studied on FB and other SNSs. SNSs offer many examples of naturally occurring talk, which seems to be where implicit compliments and other variations of phatic communication are observed.

Boyle (2000) asserts that there are two ways in which implicit compliments are presented: the first by referring to something that a person has done that he is proud of, and the second is by comparing the complimentee to somebody that the complimenter thinks that the complimentee admires (p. 35). He states that in order for implicit compliments to be successfully interpreted, hearers and researchers rely on a variety of procedures, those being indexicality, documentary method, and the reciprocity of perspectives (p. 31). Indexicality refers to objects and events as having multiple meanings, and that the contexts in which things occur gives meaning (p. 31, citing Leiter, 1980). This method is used extensively in interpreting implicit compliments that refer to something the hearer has done that he is proud of (p. 35). The documentary method for interpreting implicit compliments requires a hearer (typically a researcher) to draw on his own background and things that he has seen and observed in the past to create a schema to make sense of the observations (p. 33). Reciprocity of perspectives involves putting yourself in another's shoes in order to see the

world from their perspective and interpreting an utterance from that perspective (p. 34). When interpreting implicit compliments that involve a comparison between the hearer and somebody that the hearer is thought to admire, all three methods of interpretation are needed (p. 40).

2.3.1.3 Effect of setting on compliments

2.3.1.3.1 Rees-Miller

Rees-Miller explores the idea of gender differences in compliments in her 2011 study. She suggests that in past studies, the results have been heavily influenced due to who conducts fieldwork (typically women) and the physical locations where observations are made (typically situations which involve more women than men). She examines two corpora, both collected via field notes from observation (see Jucker (2009) in Chapter 3): one in 2008 and one in 2010, with various checks in place to try to ensure gender equality in gathering data. The outcome was startling: the results of the 2008 corpus were similar to those of Holmes (1988, 1998) in that women gave more compliments than men, and compliments on appearance and performance were the most frequently complimented topics. The 2010 corpus, however, yielded different patterns: men gave slightly more compliments than women, and men and women received approximately the same number of compliments. The most common topics of compliments given to all interlocutors in 2010 related to performance or ability, which is different than almost all other studies, in which appearance is the most frequent topic of compliments.

The difference between the results of the two corpora seems to largely be due to the settings in which compliments were collected. Rees-Miller (2011)

distinguishes between what she calls unstructured settings and goal-oriented activities. Unstructured observations occurred during students' down time, where they were not interacting for any specific purpose, such as in the dining hall, common areas, or entertainment venues. Goal-oriented activities, on the other hand, happen with a purpose, such as student clubs or sports. The majority (70%) of Rees-Miller's 2008 corpus, in which appearance was the most frequent topic of compliment, was collected in unstructured environments. On the other hand, the majority of the 2010 corpus (72.4%) was collected during goal-oriented activities. This demonstrates how research design can impact a study's results.

A further result of Rees-Miller's study was that men gave and received more compliments than women in goal-oriented settings, while the reverse was true for unstructured settings, in which women gave and received more compliments than men. The majority of compliment topics in goal-oriented settings focused on performance, both for men (98.9%) and women (68.4%). Rees-Miller also found that men rarely complimented each other on appearance in any setting, and almost never gave compliments on appearance to other men (but see Chapters 4 and 5, below, for a discussion of contrary findings in the current study).

Rees-Miller's (2011) data shows that in certain contexts, men are indeed recipients of compliments, and more often than women. Concerning the functions of compliments, she discusses how compliments on appearance between women serve as phatic communication, intended to open the door to further communication and reinforce solidarity, but that appearance compliments do not function in the same way for men (p. 2682). She does not

explain what function appearance compliments fulfill for men, and instead gives an example of a compliment on appearance that results in pragmatic failure (p. 2685). She notes that in her data, there were only four examples of male-male appearance compliments, and those largely focused on possessions (such as a shirt), rather than appearance.

Compliments in a goal-oriented setting do not fulfill the phatic purpose of creating an opening for small talk, according to Rees-Miller (2011: 2685). It is unclear, however, what Rees-Miller (2001) means by phatic communication, as she does not define it, and goes on to state that compliments in goal-oriented activities illustrate phatic communication in that they serve as openers for conversation and reinforce shared values (p. 2686). The primary function of compliments in a goal-oriented setting may not be to initiate a conversation, but it clearly does occur, as in Rees-Miller's example (p. 2686):

Setting: Snack bar at lunch time

Male 1: What's up, man? You were great in the game last night.

Male 2: [high five] Thanks, dude.

While this example shows the compliment functioning as both an opening for conversation and as a reinforcement of shared values, I would argue that it was not given in a goal-oriented setting (snack bar), but related to something that previously occurred in a goal-oriented setting. It is a minor, but important point. I would offer my own example of a community orchestra. A person may compliment a nearby player who he does not know particularly well on his or her ability in the hopes of striking up a conversation and possibly a friendship, as well as reinforcing solidarity, which is what Rees-Miller (2011) suggests is the primary function of compliments in non-goal-oriented settings. She further

asserts that an absence of compliments in such a setting can be viewed as passive-aggressive behavior. The greatest contribution of Rees-Miller's study is that considering and understanding the context of a study, and the research design used, are crucial in interpreting and applying its results to other studies.

2.3.2 Compliment studies in Spanish

One of the earliest studies on compliments in the Spanish language was by Yáñez (1990), in her study on compliments among Chicano women in the United States. To gather a corpus, Yáñez frequented locations where Chicano women of varying ages were known to gather, such as weddings, potluck dinners, family reunions, coffee shops, department stores, and church meetings, which yielded a corpus of forty-one compliment-compliment response pairs (p. 81). It is not clear whether Yáñez personally knew any of the women she encountered during her note taking, or whether she participated in any of the conversations. She states that in non-public locations (family reunions, weddings, etc.), she was introduced by acquaintances, so we may assume that there may have been some degree of participation by the author. Yáñez found that compliments in her corpus of Chicano Spanish speakers followed a few basic patterns:

Qué ADJ NP

Qué ADJ Verb NP

NP Verb ADJ

Yáñez found that while adjectives were frequently used to convey a positive message, there was very little variety in adjectives used (p. 82). Out of

24 total adjectives, nearly half of those (11) were the same adjective: *bonito* (pretty) (p. 82). Other adjectives used occurred only once or twice.

Yáñez's study included compliments in English as well as Spanish, given the bilingual context of her study (see Chapter 3 for a discussion of handling compliments in other languages in the current study). She found two of the same syntactic patterns in her corpus that Manes and Wolfson (1981) found in their study of AmE:

NP is/looks ADJ

I like NP

Similar to the previous findings on AmE, Yáñez found a small variety of verbs used in compliments that were given in English: to be, to look, and to like (p. 83). There is no information given by Yáñez as to which verbs the Spanish speakers in her corpus preferred; she only gives one example: *salir* ('to turn out'). Yáñez places more emphasis on adjectives used by Spanish speakers in her study, rather than verb usage.

With respect to compliment topics, Yáñez found that children attracted the highest number of compliments (12), followed by clothing (7), food (6), personal appearance (6), jewelry (6), hairstyle (5), and creativity (2). She notes that this is unsurprising, given the importance of children in Chicano culture. However, if she had classified her topics differently by combining some of the topics listed above, the outcome would have been slightly different. By combining clothing, personal appearance, jewelry, and hairstyle, the total number of compliments on the larger category of appearance is 24, in which case compliments among Chicano women would have more closely resemble those found by Manes and Wolfson (1981) in AmE, in which appearance is the most

frequent topic of compliments (see Chapter 4 for a discussion of arranging data in order to achieve different outcomes). Likewise, by combining food and creativity into one larger category of ability, for example, we would have 8 compliments. Yáñez is not clear as to what sort of compliments make up her category of personal appearance, i.e., whether the compliments are on natural beauty or something that the recipient has done to enhance her appearance. If the compliments cover something that the hearer has done to enhance her appearance, then this corpus would further resemble AmE, as Manes (1983) found that the majority of compliments on AmE do not relate to natural beauty, but rather something done to enhance natural beauty. Compliments on jewelry could also be interpreted as compliments on possessions, rather than as a compliment on appearance, further altering the outcome. The lack of consistency in the parameters of compliment categories makes it difficult to make comparisons across studies.

Placencia and Yépez Lasso contributed to the body of compliment studies of Spanish with their 1999 work on Ecuadorian Spanish (EcSp). This study is framed in the ethnographic tradition, in the line of Manes (1980), Manes and Wolfson (1980, 1981), Manes (1983) and Wolfson's (1983) studies. As such, Placencia and Yépez Lasso's study highlights some elements that seem to span the majority of compliment studies: who compliments whom; ages and the relationship of those giving and receiving compliments; topics of compliments; semantic and syntactic structures of compliments; and the function of compliments.

Placencia and Yépez Lasso's study is based on a corpus of 130 compliment and response sequences collected by university students in Quito in

the late 1990's. The corpus they used derives from field notes from participant observation (see Chapter 3), and the majority of compliments (68.46%) occurred among 17-30-year olds, and were exchanged between females (40.76%).

Compliments given by males to females closely followed with 30.76%. The researchers also noted, to some extent, paralinguistic and non-verbal cues that occurred with compliment exchanges. However, as these were not systematically recorded, they do not give a complete picture of all that occurred with the compliments and responses. With respect to compliments on personality, Placencia and Yépez Lasso (1999) noted compliments corresponding to tidiness, charm, taste, courage, dedication to studies, and intelligence (p. 94).

Out of 130 recorded compliment-response pairs, only 18 (14%) occurred between males (p. 89). However, of their nine observers, only three were male, which may have had an impact on the composition of data (cf. Rees-Miller, 2011). Placencia and Yépez Lasso found that the majority of compliments observed in their study focused on appearance (50.34%), followed by possessions (18.88%), abilities (17.48%), and personality (13.28%). There is no description of how the categories were broken down within each compliment-response pair, so we cannot determine which categories of compliments occurred between men. Placencia and Yépez Lasso sub-divide the category of appearance as follows: natural beauty (permanent characteristics), youth, attractiveness or temporary beauty, and dress, following Manes (1983: p. 99), who states that compliments in AmE typically relate to aspects of physical appearance that result from some effort made on the part of the complimentee, rather than on natural beauty.

Placencia and Yépez Lasso observed the occurrence of many adjectives in their study, but only a few occurred more than once (p. 97). They also noted the use of in-group forms of adjectives, which convey a different meaning within a specific group. For example, the authors observed use of the word *tenaz* ('persistent')³ being used to convey a message of 'cool' or 'great' (p. 98).

Instead of semantically positive verbs, such as 'like' and 'love,' Placencia and Yépez Lasso note that verbs in compliments in EcSp are more neutral (p. 99). The authors observed that in EcSp the focus of the compliment was the addressee, specifically, how the addressee looks, rather than the thoughts or preferences of the speaker (the one giving the compliment) (p. 99). This is an interesting result, as it contrasts to Herbert's finding that second person focused compliments occurred least frequently overall and were used less frequently in female-female compliments than first person focused compliments (1990: 205). This indicates that EcSp does not follow all results from studies of compliments in English. The verbs *ser* and *estar*, meaning 'to be,' were frequently observed in Placencia and Yépez Lasso's study, both relating to the addressee's appearance, rather than focusing on the speaker (p. 99).

Other semantic elements of compliments in EcSp observed by Placencia and Yépez Lasso include the use of positive adverbs (*bien* – 'good'), superlative forms of adjectives (*riquísimo* – 'very tasty'), use of intensifiers with adverbs (*super* – 'a lot'), and diminutives (*cinturita* – 'small waist') (p. 100). The authors also note the use of deictic elements in EcSp compliments (for example, *tú*, familiar 'you'), though not frequently, and not at all in elliptical or abbreviated

³ Individual words in Spanish are translated in the first occurrence of each section. Full sentences are fully translated throughout.

forms of compliments (p. 101). Contextual clues may clarify whom the compliment is directed towards, or, when an elliptical compliment occurs between two people, when there is no possibility of mistaking the intended recipient of the compliment.

A unique semantic element observed in EcSp by Placencia and Yépez Lasso is the use of the definite article along with the name of the person being complimented, for example, “*¡Qué capa la Jackie!*” (‘How talented Jackie is!’) (p. 101). The authors suggest that this technique is used when the speaker wants the compliment to be overheard by others.

Placencia and Yépez Lasso suggest that while formulaic compliments exist in EcSp, it is to a lesser extent than in AmE because, unlike AmE, in which the positive semantic load is conveyed largely by adjectives and verbs, positive value in EcSp compliments is conveyed by a much greater variety of mechanisms, such as comparisons, metaphors, adjectives, adverbs, verbs, and intensifiers, as well as other, non-standard forms of compliments (p. 104).

Placencia and Yépez Lasso found that three different categories accounted for the majority of compliments in EcSp (67.48%), and an additional three patterns accounted for 4.9% of compliments observed, meaning 72.38% of all compliments observed in EcSp were made up of only six syntactic patterns (p. 104). These syntactic categories were not the same as those observed by Yáñez (1990) among Spanish-speaking bilingual Chicano women, nor were they the same as those observed in AmE by Manes and Wolfson (1981). There was a considerable amount of variation within the categories observed by Placencia and Yépez Lasso. For example, the most commonly occurring category had several variations (Placencia and Yépez Lasso 1999:105):

(NP) + V (+INTENS) + ADJ/ADV, or

¡La comida está súper buena! ('The food is really good!')

V (+INTENS) + ADJ/ADV (+NP), or

¡Está precioso ese saco! ('It's beautiful that cardigan!')

V (+NP) (+INTENS) + ADJ/ADV

¡Estás bien! ('You look good!')

This demonstrates the way in which compliments in EcSp, despite following a basic pattern, are not highly formulaic. Table 2.2, below, shows the syntactic patterns occurring more than two times in EcSp. The reason for variation can probably be explained, at least in part, by the language itself: Spanish is very flexible with elements such as word order, and the elements required to constitute a sensible sentence (p. 106).

Table 2. 2 Compliment categories and frequency of occurrences in EcSp

Compliment Formula	Frequency
(NP) + V (+INTENS) + ADJ/ADV V (+INTENS) + ADJ/ADV (+NP) V (+NP) (+INTENS) + ADJ/ADV	34.96%
(INTERJ) + (+qué) +ADJ (+POSS + NP) (INTERJ) + (+qué) +ADJ (+que + V)	22.08%
Qué (+ADJ) + NP (+que + V)	10.42%
Tan + ADJ	1.84%
Cómo + V	1.84%
NP + gustar/fascinar Gustar/fascinar + NP	1.22%

Placencia and Yépez Lasso (1999) highlight the use of indirect compliments by speakers of EcSp to demonstrate that compliments in EcSp are

not highly formulaic. They observed that speakers used a variety of structures in expressing indirect compliments, including: conditions, modal verbs, questions, tag questions, noun phrases, and embedded sentences (p. 107). These indirect compliment formulations accounted for 27.6% of compliments in the study.

Women both gave and received the majority of compliments in Placencia and Yépez Lasso's (1999) study. However, they point out that in terms of giving compliments, women did not give significantly more compliments than men (58.74% vs. 41.25%). Interestingly, in every category examined, women both gave and received more compliments than men, except for two: achievement or ability, and permanent beauty. In the achievement or ability category, men gave and received more compliments than women. In the category of natural beauty, women received more compliments than men, but men gave compliments (to women) in this category more often. It is also interesting to note that women gave far more compliments on non-permanent beauty than natural or permanent beauty (27 vs. 10). The authors also point out that many of the compliments made by males on natural beauty have sexual overtones.

An interesting feature observed by Placencia and Yépez Lasso, which seemed to be a uniquely female feature in their study, is that of eliciting compliments (p. 109). It seemed that it was expected that females receive compliments on their appearance, particularly changes in appearance, and when such compliments were not forthcoming, the would-be recipient sometimes prompted or 'fished' for a compliment.

Face to face compliments in EcSp appear to fulfill a variety of functions, the most significant appearing to be the expression of admiration or approval (p. 115). Additionally, some compliments seem to perform other functions, such as

making requests, flirting, thanking, encouraging, congratulating, and softening criticism.

In a further analysis of EcSp (Quito), this time as compared to Peninsular Spanish (PenSp) (Seville), Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez (2013) examine at compliments in Spanish from a variational pragmatics perspective (cf. Schneider and Barron 2008). Their study compared compliments among female university students from these two cities. While this is not an identical demographic to the current study, it is similar enough to provide a helpful point of comparison for the current study. Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez (2013) used a dialogue construction questionnaire (see Chapter 3) in order to gain some insight into compliments between women in EcSp and PenSp.

The authors found that the complimenting behavior of the two groups of Spanish speakers was broadly similar (p. 111). They identified seven syntactic patterns for compliments, summarized below, along with the results from Placencia and Yépez Lasso (1999) for comparison.

Table 2. 3 Comparison of compliment patterns

Placencia and Yépez Lasso, 1999		Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez, 2013		
Pattern	% (EcSp)	Pattern	% (PenSp)	% (EcSP)
(NP) +	34.96%	Intensifier +	48.55%	34.65%
V (+INTENS) + ADJ/ADV		ADJ ((+POS) + SN)		
or		or		
V (+INTENS) + ADJ/ADV (+NP)		ADJ ((+que) + V (+SN)		
or		or		
V (+NP) (+INTENS) + ADJ/ADV		(ADJ)(pronoun)		
		or		
		NP		

		or ADV (+que) + V + (NP)		
(INTERJ) + (+qué) +ADJ (+POSS + NP) or (INTERJ) + (+qué) +ADJ (+que + V)	22.08%	V + (intens) + ADJ/ADV	30.28%	35.96%
Qué (+ADJ) + NP (+que + V)	10.42%	V + (intens) + ADJ/ADV ⁴	8.17%	5.94%
Tan + ADJ	1.84%	(ADJ (+POS + SN)) or (intens) + ADV)	3.84%	8.41%
Cómo + V	1.84%	Interjections that function as compliments	4.8%	4.95%
NP + gustar/fascinar gustar/fascinar + NP	1.22%	Use of the verb 'pegar' or written 'whistles'	0	3.66%
Indirect forms	27.6%	Indirect forms	4.32%	6.43%

Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez note that the majority of compliments observed in their study used direct form of compliments, more specifically, either the first or second pattern listed in Table 2.3 (p. 112), whereas other studies of compliments in Spanish had a higher proportion of indirect forms of compliments. The authors suggest that the methodology used in their study, which consisted of questionnaires covering specific scenarios, may account for this difference (p. 115). They note that there are routine situations, such as a new haircut, that call for a compliment, which leads to more routine, direct compliment formulations (p. 115). The authors point out that in ethnographic studies, there exist a wider variety of situations than the four selected for their study, which leads to a wider variety of compliment formulations (p. 115),

⁴ The difference between pattern 2 and pattern 3 lies in the verb choice. Pattern 2 uses “hearer-centered” verbs that focus on the hearer, such as ‘to be’. Verbs used in pattern 3 tend to be “speaker-centered”, such as ‘I like’. See Herbert (1990) for a discussion of use of speaker and hearer-centered verbs.

highlighting how compliments are influenced by the context in which they occur (see Rees-Miller 2010).

An interesting aspect of Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez's (2013) study is how the positive valuation within the compliment is conveyed. They found that both groups primarily used adjectives to convey a positive message, followed by use of adverbs by the EcSp group, and verbs by the PenSp group (p. 118). The authors discovered that, while adjectives were used most frequently in the study data (113 EcSp and 120 PenSp examples), there were relatively few different adjectives used (p. 119). *Guapo* ('handsome') and *rico* ('delicious') were among the three most used adjectives in both varieties, with *chulo* ('cool') being the third for the PenSp corpus, and *lindo* ('pretty') for the EcSp corpus (p. 120).

With respect to verbs, both groups used *encantar* ('to love'), *gustar* ('to like'), and *querer* ('to want') (p. 120). Apart from those, the authors did not note a great variety of different verbs observed in the study. The use of adverbs similarly did not exhibit a great deal of variety, with *bien* being used most frequently in both groups (p. 121). As well as conveying a positive message via adjectives, verbs, and adverbs, Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez's study participants used, though less frequently, nouns and interjections to deliver praise (pp. 121-22).

In addition to using various grammatical elements to convey a positive message, Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez (2013) observed that the EcSp and PenSp speakers in their study used internal modifiers in order to reinforce a positive message (p. 122). While both groups of participants used internal modifiers, the authors found that the Spanish women used them more frequently than the Ecuadorian women (p. 122). The different types of internal

modifications that the authors found were: phonetic resources, adverbial intensifiers, suffixes and prefixes, verbs, interjections, and a catchall category of 'other.' The authors did not observe any reliance on phonetic mechanisms, such as vowel elongation, used by the PenSp speakers. The most frequently used modifiers in both groups were adverbial intensifiers (p. 123), the most commonly used words being *mucho* ('a lot'), and *muy* ('very') (p. 123).

In addition to internal modifiers, Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez note the use of various types of supportive moves, which they divide into two categories: those that act as intensifiers of the compliment and those that express in the compliment recipient (2015:124-25). Supportive moves that act as intensifiers include nominal forms of address, tag questions, and interjections, and were used more frequently by the Spanish study participants (p. 125-26). Quiteño participants, on the other hand, used supportive moves that showed interest in the hearer (p. 125).

While the results of Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez's (2013) study demonstrate that compliments among Ecuadorian and Spanish women are formulaic in the situations constructed for their study, there still exists a great deal of variation and creativity, which is found principally through the use of internal and external modifiers (p. 129). This is an important point, and is often lost in compliment literature, with the focus often being on how formulaic compliments tend to be.

Maíz-Arévalo (2010) offers a comparison on compliments in English and PenSp, building on research done by Holmes (1986, 1995) and Herbert (1989, 1990) (Section 2.3.1) as a point of reference in her analysis of 50 conversational exchanges occurring naturally in PenSp (p. 178). The author sets out to answer

questions typically posed in compliment studies, though this time in regards to PenSp, specifically: what is the main function of compliments; what are the topics of compliments; are there differences in how men and women compliment; and how do responses factor in (p. 178).

Maíz-Arévalo notes that other research on compliments has highlighted that compliments are highly formulaic. She proposes three main syntactic patterns for compliments in PenSp, which account for 75% of compliments in her study: 1) affirmative statement with copulative verb followed by a positive adjective, which express either a permanent state or a temporary one; 2) exclamative clause, which usually refers either to the receiver of the compliment or his possessions or abilities; and 3) affirmative statement where the speaker verbalizes his opinion or admiration (pp. 178-79). Maíz-Arévalo points out that in some examples in her corpus of PenSp compliments, speakers sometimes combine the patterns listed above to form a more elaborate and longer compliment.

Drawing on Holmes (1995), Maíz-Arévalo (2010) offers four functions of compliments: 1) expression of solidarity; 2) expression of positive evaluation, admiration, appreciation or praise; 3) expression of envy or a desire for the hearer's possessions; or 4) verbal harassment (p. 182). She points out that in her PenSp corpus, most compliments fall under the first two functions, labeling these as "positive politeness strategies" (p. 182). Maíz-Arévalo suggests that there is no clear difference between functions one and two, above, and states that with respect to her corpus, most compliments convey a positive evaluation of the listener's appearance or personal possessions (p. 182). She further highlights that these positive evaluations frequently occur when there is a "new status,"

such as changes in appearance or new articles of clothing, and that both the speaker and the hearer seem to expect a compliment in these situations (p. 182).

Apart from the positive politeness functions fulfilled by compliments, Maíz-Arévalo (2010) offers some additional functions of compliments in PenSp. She suggests that, similar to Greek (cf. Sifianou 2001), compliments in PenSp can be a substitute for apologies, can function as part of requests, can form part of thanking, and can function as part of greeting (pp. 183-86).

Concerning the topics of compliments, Maíz-Arévalo's (2010) found that compliments on appearance occurred most frequently— 87.5% of the time (p. 188)—but splits the category of appearance into compliments on appearance (65%) and possessions (22.5%). These are followed by compliments on skills (10%), and a catchall category of 'other' (2.5%) (p. 189). Maíz-Arévalo's (2010) findings in PenSp demonstrate that compliments are most frequently given by women to both women and men, though are given more often to other women (p. 191).

Most compliment studies, regardless of language, deal with explicit compliments. Maíz-Arévalo (2012), building on Boyle's work (2000) in AmE, offers a preliminary view of implicit compliments in PenSp, and the possible motivations behind their use. She defines implicit compliments as those that do not have a fixed linguistic form, leaving the responsibility of interpretation with the listener (p. 983). She found that while implicit compliments in PenSp appear to be creative, they often follow patterns in terms of form and when they are used.

Citing Boyle (2000), Maíz-Arévalo (2012) identifies two main ways in which speakers use implicit compliments: first by comparing the hearer to

somebody that the speaker thinks that the hearer may admire; and the second, by referring to something that the hearer has done that he is proud of (p. 984) (see also 2.3.1.2.1). Based on this, use of an implicit compliment seems to demand at least some personal knowledge of the compliment recipient. She suggests that implicit compliments are frequently used in relation to appearance and skill in order to minimize face threats, though presumably, in relationships with a high degree of intimacy, compliments should not be face-threatening. In addition to these two ways of using implicit compliments, Maíz-Arévalo (2012) found three additional patterns: 1) complimenting a third entity connected to the hearer (27%); 2) comparison by omission of the second part of the comparative (11.5%); and 3) asking the hearer an apparently irrelevant question (7.5%) (p. 988).

In order to gain insight into why interlocutors chose to use implicit rather than explicit forms of compliments, Maíz-Arévalo followed up her recordings of naturally occurring compliments with interviews of selected participants (p. 993). She found that while most participants had not given thought to their pragmatic motivations for choosing one type of compliment over another, the general consensus was that implicit compliments are used in order to avoid face threats to hearers. Other motivations for using implicit compliments, according to interviewees, was to pay a compliment in a way that the hearer would perceive as sincere, and not forced or fake, and as a method of paying a compliment to somebody that the speaker does not know very well, which suggests, in my view, that implicit compliments may not demand some intimacy between the speaker and the hearer in order to function (p. 993).

2.3.3 Compliment studies on social networking sites

The body of research on compliment studies on SNSs is increasing rapidly, and is branching out into a variety of languages, including AmE, British English (BrE), and PenSp (discussed below) and Persian (Eslami, Jabbari, and Kuo, 2019). In this section, I will discuss Maíz-Arévalo and García-Gómez's (2013) comparative study of compliments on FB in BrE and PenSp, focusing on the PenSp element as it more relevant to the current study. I will next examine Placencia and Lower's (2013) study of compliments on FB in AmE because it offers a wide overview of complimenting behavior on FB. Finally, I discuss Placencia's (2019) study of compliments in EcSpn on Instagram because it covers a variety of Spanish that is a focus of the current study.

Maíz-Arévalo and García Gómez (2013) undertook a comparative study of BrE and PenSp compliments on FB. The authors analyzed FB postings occurring in a "community" that they were involved with for over a year prior to data collection (p. 742). This community had nearly 200 participants at the time of data collection, with ages ranging from 25-45 and the study focuses on 100 compliment exchanges: 50 in BrE and 50 in PenSp.

The authors focused exclusively on explicit compliments, arguing that explicit compliments on FB are formulaic and fit into three main categories, which are different than those seen in face-to-face interactions: 1) exclamative sentences (*Qué preciosa* – 'how cute'); 2) declarative sentences (*Me encanta tu nuevo look* – 'I love your new look'); and 3) ellipticals (*guapa* – 'handsome') (p. 743). The authors then go on to state that these syntactic forms have intrinsic meaning; exclamative sentences are an expression of the speaker's emotion, while declarative sentences are an expression of fact. Ellipticals allow speakers

to avoid repetition by omitting known information and focusing on new information (p. 752).

Maíz-Arévalo and García Gómez (2013) divide exclamative compliments into full structure (“How hunky you are”) and abbreviated structure (“What a hunk”). They further divide exclamative compliments as being about appearance, personality or personal skills, or possessions. The authors assert that 87% of all examples found consist of an exclamative structure, which includes the adjectives *guapo* (‘handsome’) or *bonito* (‘pretty’) (p. 745). It is unclear whether they are only referring to their 50 Spanish examples, or whether this statistic applies to the English examples as well.

The authors claim that their data demonstrate that Spaniards frequently and openly express admiration for physical beauty and intelligence by way of both full and abbreviated exclamative compliments. Maíz-Arévalo and García-Gómez’s data also shows that there are more exclamative compliments on appearance by Spaniards, and more on possessions for British participants.

Turning to those compliments structured as declarative statements, the authors assert that this is an attempt by participants to represent their opinions, i.e., compliments, as facts. The authors divide these declarative compliments into those that represent a mental process of affection (an affective fact, demonstrated by using the verbs ‘to love’ or ‘to like’) and those whose mental process is relational (a true fact, using verbs such as ‘to be’, ‘to look’, ‘to seem’, etc.) (p. 746).

As with exclamative compliments, the authors divide declarative compliments into those pertaining to appearance, those pertaining to personality, and those relating to possessions. A distinction is also drawn

between full and abbreviated forms, and the authors explain that in the abbreviated form of declarative compliments the direct object is dropped. The authors compare the frequencies of declarative compliments in PenSp and BrE, and remark that their usage is relatively low in comparison to face-to-face interactions; though they do not specify which particular face-to-face corpus they are referring to. They go on to assert that participants in their study use declarative compliments either to be very specific about what exactly they like ("I like this one"), or to upgrade the mental process of affection ("I love your shoes more than anything else") (p. 748).

Maíz-Arévalo and García-Gómez (2013) argue that users aim to achieve one of two purposes by using declarative compliments as fact: 1) to ensure that the addressee is the main focus, as the person making the compliment is not in the sentence ("Your face looks great"); or 2) to shed a positive light on the addressee and to highlight the addressee's qualities above all others ("You are the prettiest girl in the pic!") (p. 751).

They list ellipticals as a third syntactic structure for compliments, but say that because ellipticals are so complex that their analysis of them is not detailed. The authors state that ellipsis is used to demonstrate in-group status by leaving out information that is already known (citing Downing and Locke, 1992) (p. 752). The authors also state that by not framing a compliment as an emotional outburst or a statement of fact, complimenters are leaving interpretation up to the complementee. They say that the process of co-construction helps strengthen rapport and solidarity, which they say is in line with Brown and Levinson's (1987) positive politeness theory. The results in this sample are that the Spanish

use ellipsis frequently to evaluate appearance and tended not to use ellipsis to evaluate personality.

While this method of classifying compliments offered by Maíz-Arévalo and García Gómez is an interesting attempt at offering a new categorization of compliments, it is not clear that there is a difference between exclamatives as expressions of a speaker's emotions and declaratives as expressions of fact. Additionally, this classification scheme gives little visibility into how compliments are actually used in PenSp and BrE with respect to topics of compliments.

Placencia and Lower (2013) studied compliments in AmE on FB, focusing on compliments directed at women by both women and men, although there were relatively few examples of compliments given by men. The authors gathered a large corpus (1057 compliments) and analyzed types of compliments (explicit versus implicit), topics of compliments, and syntactic patterns of compliments. Placencia and Lower looked at compliment frequency vis-à-vis other comments; that is, what proportion of comments on a participant's photographs were compliments. The authors also give some insight into 'like', a feature of FB.

With respect to explicit compliments, Placencia and Lower (2013) found that the syntactic patterns observed in their data closely resembled those found by Manes and Wolfson (1981), or elliptical forms of those patterns. For example, the most commonly observed compliment pattern by Manes and Wolfson (1981) was:

(NP {is/looks} (really) ADJ)

This pattern accounted for the majority of compliments in Placencia and Lower's (2013) data as well (49%), but with the following additional elliptical forms:

looks (really) ADJ

(really) ADJ

The authors put these differences down to the informal environment of FB, as well as possible changes in language use since Manes and Wolfson's (1981) study (p. 632).

According to Placencia and Lower (2013), 'like' on FB is a subset of compliments on its own, along with explicit and implicit compliments. They argue that 'like' is a gesture that expresses approval and should be treated as a type of compliment (p. 633). That said, the authors do point out that despite its superficially clear positive evaluation, 'like' remains somewhat ambiguous, because it is often unclear what is actually being 'liked.'

Placencia and Lower (2013) discuss the use of internal and external modifications in the context of FB compliments as a way for FB users to convey affective meaning, which can be difficult in the textual exchanges found on FB. The authors noted a variety of internal modifiers in their corpus, including the use of capital letters, vowel lengthening, and multiple exclamation marks. For external modifiers, Placencia and Lower (2013) note the use of emoticons (not emojis, which were not available at the time the data for this study were gathered). The authors speculate that these modification mechanisms are used in order to make online speech simulate face-to-face interactions.

Compliments on appearance comprised the majority of compliments in Placencia and Lower's (2013) study. In addition to a participant's physical

appearance, the authors also included compliments on children and pets under the category of appearance, as the compliments directed towards children and pets related to appearance as well. Placencia and Lower (2013) also noted compliments on possessions (8%), ability (7%), personality (5%), friendship (4%), and another, catchall category (1%) (p. 637). Females in Placencia and Lower's study gave the majority of compliments, as well as the majority of 'likes' on photographs (p. 638).

As to the function of compliments on FB, Placencia and Lower (2013) suggest that in addition to fulfilling the standard function of solidarity and rapport-building in the context of interactions among family and friends, FB compliments function as a form of phatic communication (p. 639). This enables users to affirm relationships, both via comments and compliments, but with 'like' as well in an easy and efficient way. Bonds are maintained, and perhaps even strengthened, with relatively little inconvenience to any party (but see Placencia et al., 2016, for the suggestion that too much participation on FB can cause irritation to others).

Similar to Eslami, Jabbari, and Kuo's (2015) study of compliment responses on profile photos on FB, Placencia's (2019) study of compliments to older teenage Ecuadorian females on Instagram focuses on what she calls "solo shots," after Farquhar (2012), or only those photos which include the study participant. These "solo shots" are not to be confused with the "selfie," as the "solo shots" involved here were often taken by somebody other than the user.

Placencia (2019) observes similar types of compliments as those found in other compliment studies on social media (cf. Maíz-Arévalo and García-Gómez, 2013; and Placencia and Lower, 2013). However, she also observed two other

types of compliments in her data, which display multimodality: pictorial compliments with multiple emojis, and hashtag compliments.

Placencia (2019) examines conventional, direct compliments found in her data, but also observed indirect compliments. While indirect compliments typically do not have a set of formulae ascribed to them, Placencia notes that compliments realized as claims of possession (for example, 'You are mine'), might be becoming normalized within the study participant group, indicating a growing degree of formulaicity.

Despite the availability of a wide range of emojis and the increasing use of hashtags of compliments, Placencia observed that verbal forms of compliments constituted the majority of compliments in her study at 94.4%. This figure excludes the use of 'likes', however, which Placencia classifies as a subset of hybrid compliments (in which hashtag compliments are also present). With respect to conventional, verbal compliments, elliptical forms occurred the most (55.71%). Placencia argues that emojis used as pictorial compliments and interjections can be thought of in a similar way to elliptical forms of conventional, verbal compliments, in that they concisely convey a positive message. The author found that these types of abbreviated compliments make up over two-thirds of incidences of compliments in her data.

Placencia (2019) observes a pattern of internal modification and supportive moves used throughout her data. Internal modifications that Placencia observed include repetition, superlative constructions, prosodic spellings, augmentative suffixes, intensifying adverbs, use of English, and an 'other' category, that includes mechanisms that only occurred once. With respect to supportive moves, Placencia observed second verbal compliments,

interjections, verbal expressions of affection, affiliative nominal forms of address, emojis, and hashtags. Out of all these different strategies for internal modification and supportive moves, emojis were used the most frequently, or 50.34% of the time.

The studies examined in this section provide a solid groundwork for the goal of the current study: a variational pragmatics analysis of compliments on FB in EcSp and PenSp. This literature review is by no means comprehensive: there are many more studies on compliments in a variety of languages that contribute to the body of compliment literature. The studies discussed here have been trimmed substantially to only cover those that are immediately relevant to the current study: compliments among Ecuadorian and Spanish men on FB. The next section will explore the flipside of compliments: compliment responses.

2.4 Studies of compliment responses

This section examines the research on compliment responses, the complementary element to a compliment. As with compliments, compliment responses studies have been conducted in a variety of languages, and from a variety of methodological perspectives. With the rise in the use of social media, compliment response research is now also being conducted in online settings. This section will first focus on past studies that laid the groundwork for compliment response studies (2.4.1), followed by studies on compliment responses in Spanish (2.4.2) and finally, compliment responses on SNSs (2.4.3).

2.4.1 Relevant background studies

Prior to Manes and Wolfson's 1980 and 1981 studies, Pomerantz (1978) observed the formulaic nature of compliment responses. She observed that while compliments may receive responses in opposites of acceptance and agreement or rejection and disagreement, the majority of compliment responses fall somewhere in between these two. In terms of the two constraints described above, Pomerantz suggests that the recipient of a compliment can either agree or disagree with the compliment, and the recipient can either accept or reject the compliment. In the first constraint (agree/disagree), agreement is typically the preferred response to a compliment, while in the second constraint (accept/reject), acceptance of the compliment is the preferred response, due to the supportive function of compliments. Pomerantz found that despite this preference, compliment responses did not include the most preferred responses (accept and agree) the majority of the time. This gives rise to a third constraint: the avoidance of self-praise. Responding to a compliment with either an agreement or acceptance is in direct conflict with a recipient's desire to avoid self-praise. Avoiding self-praise is a constraint imposed on the compliment recipient by himself, whereas the agree/disagree and accept/reject constraints come about due to the nature of compliments themselves, and perhaps by societal constraints.

Pomerantz explains that by accepting a compliment, the recipient is essentially agreeing with it, which is opposed to the recipient's desire to avoid self-praise. In her data, Pomerantz observed some patterns of compliment responses that suggest that recipients deploy various strategies for avoiding self-

praise while at the same time accepting the supportive function of compliments.

These are summarized in Table 2.4.

Table 2. 4 Pomerantz's (1978) compliment response strategies for avoiding self-praise

	Solution Type		Example
1	Praise Downgrade		
	1.a	Agreement	A: I've been offered a full scholarship at Berkeley and at UCLA. B: That's fantastic. A: Isn't that good.
	1.b	Disagreement	A: Good shot. B: Not very solid though.
2	Referent Shift		
	2.a	Re-assignment of praise	A: You're a good rower, Honey. B: These are very easy to row. Very light.
	2.b	Return	A: Yer lookin good. B: Great, So'r you.

Building on Pomerantz's (1978) work, in addition to Brown and Levinson's (1987[1978]) politeness theory, is Holmes (1986). Brown and Levinson frame compliment responses in terms of a person's face requirements. They suggest the ideas of positive and negative politeness, which they label redressive actions that seek to balance the potential damage to the interlocutors' face. Brown and Levinson classify compliments as examples of positive politeness as they diminish a face-threatening act by validating the listener's positive face. However, they go on to suggest that compliments and responses can be face-threatening acts in and of themselves in that they may be seen, for example, as expressing a speaker's wish to have something belonging to the hearer, or prefacing a criticism.

Holmes (1986) analyzes compliment responses in NZE from a semantic and functional point of view, and offers the taxonomy set out below in Table 2.5, which builds on Pomerantz's (1978) notions of a constraint system and Leech's (1983) politeness theory. Holmes's overarching strategies of accept, reject, and deflect or evade handle the credit contained within the compliment. The sub-strategies listed below each high-level strategy deal handle the content of the compliment, and co-occur with the overall strategies. Holmes (1986) states that non-verbal indications of agreement can "clearly" be included under the category of accept, sub-category of agreement token (p. 492).

Table 2. 5 Holmes's (1986) classification of compliment response categories

Accept	Reject	Deflect/evade
Appreciation or agreement token	Disagreeing utterance	Shift credit
Agreeing utterance	Question accuracy	Informative comment
Downgrading or qualifying utterance	Challenge complimenter's sincerity	Ignore
Return compliment		Legitimate evasion
		Request reassurance/repetition

Holmes (1986) asserts that a compliment simultaneously makes a positive judgment about the recipient and gives credit to the recipient for that positive judgment. She notes the importance of distinguishing between the complimentee's reaction to the content of the compliment and the credit for the compliment (p. 491). That is, whether the recipient agrees or not with the positive evaluation (content) of the compliment, versus whether the recipient accepts or rejects the credit implied as the recipient of the compliment. When a complimentee accepts a compliment, that person is accepting some credit, however remote, to himself inherent in the compliment. Similarly, when he rejects a compliment, he is explicitly rejecting the credit attributed to him in the

compliment. In the case of responding to a compliment with a deflection or evasion, however, Holmes (1986) notes that the recipient has a bit more flexibility to neither accept nor reject the credit, and has the additional possibility of mitigating perceived face-threatening acts, all the while behaving in a cooperative manner and maintaining modesty.

Herbert's (1986) study on compliment responses also proposes a classification scheme and is widely followed, both in studies in face-to-face contexts, and in social media studies. Herbert's starting point, like Holmes (1986), is Pomerantz (1978). Building on her work, he proposes the taxonomy show in Table 2.6 for a corpus consisting of compliment responses in AmE.

Table 2. 6 Herbert's (1986) taxonomy of compliment responses

Agreement	Non-agreement	Other Interpretation
Acceptances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciation token • Comment acceptance • Praise upgrade 	Scale down	Request
Comment history	Question	
Transfers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassignment • Return 	Non-acceptances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disagreement • Qualification 	
	No acknowledgement	

Herbert's (1986) and Holmes's (1986) taxonomies are largely similar, albeit with different category labels. While Holmes (1986) gives three broad choices in responding to a compliment (accept, reject, or deflect), Herbert (1986) effectively gives only two choices: agree or disagree with the compliment. Based on its position in Herbert's (1986) taxonomy, it appears that he views 'reassignment of praise' as a way of agreeing with the compliment, while Holmes (1986) places this ('shift praise') under the strategy of evading a compliment.

There are credible arguments for both placements within a compliment response taxonomy; neither is incorrect. It is interesting that Herbert's (1986) compliment response taxonomy contains 'no acknowledgement' as a non-agreement strategy, particularly because his taxonomy is based on face-to-face compliment studies, in which it is rare for a compliment to receive no response, something which has been frequently observed in compliment response studies on SNSs (see Placencia et al., 2016). The presence of this idea in Herbert's (1986) taxonomy indicates that an absence of responses to compliments is not something new or particularly unique to SNSs. For the current study, I follow Holmes's (1986) taxonomy as it most closely aligns with my own way of viewing compliment responses (discussed further in Chapter 3).

2.4.2 Compliment response studies in Spanish

One of the earliest studies on compliment responses in the Spanish language is Valdés and Pino's 1981 study which focused on compliment responses in three groups: English-speaking monolinguals, Spanish-speaking monolinguals (Mexican Spanish (MexSp)), and Mexican-American bilinguals. In their observations of face-to-face interactions among MexSp-speaking monolinguals, Valdés and Pino observed the same patterns of acceptance and rejection of compliments as recorded by Pomerantz (1978) for speakers of AmE (p. 58). The only exception to this was that Valdés and Pino did not find any examples of MexSp-speaking monolinguals avoiding self-praise by disagreeing with the compliment. However, the authors express confidence that with more observation and recording, an example of disagreeing with a compliment would likely occur. In other words, the authors did not believe that disagreeing with a

compliment is something that does not exist in MexSp, rather that it was not present in this particular, limited, data set. Samples for this study were drawn from MexSp in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua during Catholic church-related activities and at project sites involving a community social action group (p. 57). The second author gathered the sample for Mexican-American bilinguals over a period of two months during social interactions (p. 61).

One key observation by Valdés and Pino (1981) of their data for MexSp-speaking monolinguals was that certain response patterns were only found between intimates or only with non-intimates. This idea is in line with Wolfson's Bulge Theory (Wolfson, 1988, 1989). Valdés and Pino (1981) observed that rejecting and disagreeing with a compliment, upgrading praise, and qualifying a compliment only occurred between intimates in her sample of MexSp-speakers (p. 59).

Within their data of MexSp-speaking monolinguals, Valdés and Pino (1981) noted the reliance on politeness formulae in response to compliments. Their identification of politeness formulae is a bit unclear: they do not elaborate further on precisely what they mean by politeness formulae, or what the formulae or patterns consist of, but instead give the definition of politeness formulae as "little snippets of ritual used in every day encounters between people" (p. 59, citing Ferguson, 1976). They give some examples of politeness formulae that occurred in their data in the form of compliments and responses, but fail to note which parts of those constitute politeness formulae. Valdés and Pino (1981) go on to note that "all politeness formulas were part of compliment acceptances and also included appreciation tokens" (p. 59). There is no further explanation of what exactly these politeness formulae are, though an educated

guess leads to the belief that the following are considered by Valdés and Pino (1981) to be politeness formulae for responding to compliments:

Muy a la orden (literally, 'At your command')

Favor que le haces (literally, 'A favor you do for him/her')

Ya sabe que estoy para servirla (literally, 'You know that I'm here to serve you')

Está a tus órdenes (literally, 'It is how you like it')

While the authors do not explicitly state this, the above-listed formulae seem like elliptical forms of some sort, and by inference, they seem to classify them as a sort of elliptical form of an appreciation token (see Table 2.7). Valdés and Pino (1981) observed that these politeness formulae occur with or without an appreciation token (*gracias* – 'thanks'). Despite these politeness formulae, Valdés and Pino (1981) found that forms of acceptance of compliments by MexSp monolinguals showed more variation than those found in an English-speaking corpus by Pomerantz (1978). Table 2.7 lists the strategies used by MexSp monolinguals in accepting compliments, as observed by Valdés and Pino (1981).

Table 2. 7 Strategies for accepting compliments among Mexican monolinguals (Valdés and Pino, 1980:60)

Strategy	Example
Appreciation token	<i>Muchas gracias</i> ('thanks very much')
Appreciation token + politeness formula	<i>Muchas gracias. Muy a tus órdenes.</i> ('Thanks very much. Whatever you say')
Politeness formula on its own (ellipsis of appreciation token)	<i>Muy a sus órdenes.</i> ('Whatever you say')
Appreciation token + comment	<i>Muchas gracias. Me los regaló Juan.</i> ('Thanks very much. Juan gave it to me.')
Comment (ellipsis of appreciation token)	<i>Me los regaló Juan.</i> ('Juan gave them to me.')

Valdés and Pino (1981) note that their sample did not yield any examples of an appreciation token on its own. They note however that this form of acceptance would be the most formal and distant. The authors also note a strategy for responding to compliments that Pomerantz (1978) did not record, which is that of accepting a compliment while avoiding self-praise (60). The formula they give for this strategy is as follows:

- 1) A compliments B
- 2) B questions A about the compliment and either asks for repetition, clarification, or an expansion of the compliment
- 3) A repeats, clarifies, or expands on the compliment

Valdés and Pino (1981) explain that this method of compliment response was observed exclusively between intimates, and its function is not to upgrade praise (a response strategy contemplated by Pomerantz, 1978), but instead a method of seeking reassurance by displaying modesty (p. 60-61).

In addition to compliments (see 2.3.2), Yáñez (1990) examined compliment responses, building on the work of Pomerantz's (1978) study of AmE, and Valdés and Pino's (1981) study of compliment responses by MexSp bilinguals in the United States. She found that most of Pomerantz's response patterns occurred in responses given by Chicano women speaking English. Additionally, she found two response patterns uncovered by Valdés and Pino that did not occur in Pomerantz's data: making a comment in response to a compliment and a fragmented politeness formula (p. 83). She notes that when a compliment in Spanish was directed at no one particular person, no responses were made, regardless of whether the person who could ostensibly be the recipient of the compliment was present. For example, a compliment on food,

such as, *El arroz está muy bueno* ('the rice is very good'), received no response, even if the person who had made the rice was present and heard the compliment (p. 84). Yáñez distinguishes this sort of compliment from other similar compliments that do receive responses by either the absence or presence of the pronoun *te* ('you'). For example, the compliment, *Oye, esta salsa te salió rica* ('Listen, this salsa that you made turned out really deliciously') did receive a response, which Yáñez attributes to the presence of *te* in the sentence, which effectively directs the compliment at an individual.

In her 2001 contrastive study of BrE and PenSp compliment responses, Lorenzo-Dus suggests that Spain (and other Spanish-speaking societies) are positive politeness oriented, thus making it acceptable to accept, upgrade, or to even ask for an explanation or expansion of compliments. In her study she found that Spanish men frequently use humorous upgrades in response to compliments, indeed, this was the preferred response strategy used by Spanish men in response to compliments by Spanish women. Lorenzo-Dus did not examine how Spanish men respond to compliments from other men; instead, using DCTs, she controlled the situations to be mixed sex, determining that humorous or ironic upgrades of compliments are the preferred response shown by Spanish men in response to women.

Lorenzo-Dus (2001) states that Spanish men ironically and humorously upgrade compliments more frequently than Spanish women or their British counterparts (p. 114). She suggests that ironic upgrades demonstrate that the compliment recipient viewed the compliment as light-hearted and not to be taken seriously (p. 117). The use of ironic upgrades then functions as a method of avoiding self-praise without disagreeing with the complimenter. Lorenzo-Dus

found many examples of ironic upgrades of compliments by Spanish men, but almost a complete absence in other groups. She claims that the Spanish have a habit of poking fun at themselves in certain areas (physical appearance and personality, for example), which explains the use of ironic upgrades (p. 118). Ironic upgrades in Spanish culture are not perceived as threatening to the speaker (complimenter), because they display the desired social identity of a witty self, something desirable in Spanish culture, as well as finding common ground between interlocutors and developing rapport (p. 118). Spanish participants in Lorenzo-Dus's (2001) study frequently requested clarification on compliments, though it is not clear whether it was males or females who used this strategy more often (p. 118).

Mack and Sykes (2009) also explored Spanish compliment responses in their comparative study of responses to compliments using positive irony among MexSP and PenSp speakers in mixed sex scenarios (p. 314). Mack and Sykes used their own, unique taxonomy for compliment responses. Referring to them as compliment response strategies, the authors give five different categories for compliment responses: 1) acceptance; 2) self-praise avoidance; 3) ironic; 4) other/question and request for repetition; and 5) no compliment response recognized (p. 316). These are their overarching strategies, but, similar to Herbert (1986) and Holmes (1986), each of these five categories has various subcategories.

Speakers of MexSp and PenSp in Mack and Sykes's (2009) study were similar in their overall results (p. 319), thus lending credibility to the idea that compliment responses are formulaic across different varieties of Spanish (p. 330). The authors note that acceptance was the compliment response strategy

most favored by speakers of PenSp, which was present in 26% of responses observed. Acceptance was followed closely by the use of irony at 23.6%. Despite a professed desire to avoid self-praise, PenSp participants used this strategy in only 15.4% of instances, less frequently than MexSp participants, who tried to avoid self-praise in 24.4% of examples (p. 321). That said, according to their data as presented, the most common strategy actually deployed by speakers of PenSp and MexSp was not recognizing the compliment at all (32.5% and 29.1%, respectively).

Maíz-Arévalo's 2010 study of compliments in English and Spanish yields no examples of male-to-male compliments. The author explains that males view complimenting as feminine behavior, which accounts for the lack of examples of male-to-male compliments (and by extension, compliment responses). Maíz-Arévalo's 2010 study shows that Spanish men accepted compliments from women in 63% of the instances, rejected compliments 12% of the time, and evaded compliments 25% of the time in her study of face-to-face compliments in mixed-sex situations (p. 203). Unfortunately, it is not clear in Maíz-Arévalo's (2010) study precisely how she classifies compliment responses. She states that while Holmes's (1995) compliment response taxonomy is "quite comprehensive" it does not cover all of the *functions* of compliment responses in PenSp (p. 185). There appears to be some confusion here between form and function: Holmes (1986) in her compliment response taxonomy lays out the forms that compliment responses take (p. 492). These responses do not explicitly account for the function of such responses, and Maíz-Arévalo (2010) appears to be confounding the two. Maíz-Arévalo (2010) offers the following as potential compliment responses: accept, reject, or evade, but does not offer any

explanation at all on these, and whether they are supported by various sub-categories, as is the case with Holmes (1986 and 1995).

Maíz-Arévalo (2012) undertook a contrastive study of compliment responses in NZE, using Holmes's (1995) corpus, and PenSp, using her own corpus collected via field analysis. Maíz-Arévalo (2012) set out to show that, firstly, compliment responses are not as formulaic as previously thought, and secondly, given cultural differences between English and Spanish speakers, speakers of these languages will respond to compliments in different ways (p. 4). The author also sets out to highlight problems with intercultural compliment and response exchanges, particularly those between English and Spanish speakers.

While Maíz-Arévalo (2012) relies on Holmes's (1995) compliment response taxonomy, she states that it is not wholly applicable to compliment responses in PenSp, due to Spanish compliment responses being highly elaborate and taking place over several conversational turns (p. 5). Holmes's (1995) taxonomy, according to Maíz-Arévalo (2012) does not cover all types of responses that she found in her PenSp corpus, nor does it account for non-verbal responses (p. 6). I would argue that Holmes's (1986, 1995) taxonomy contemplates non-verbal responses within the category of accept: appreciation or agreement token. Holmes (1986) describes this category as: a thanks, yes, or a smile (p. 492), and goes on to explain that the term agreement token (coined by Pomerantz, 1978) covers non-verbal indicators of agreement (p. 492).

Similar to results in NZE, Maíz-Arévalo (2012) found that PenSp speaking participants in her corpus accepted compliments the majority of the time (47%) though less frequently than English-speaking participants (64%). She also found that PenSp speakers in her corpus rejected compliments 24.5% of the time (p. 7).

Maíz-Arévalo (2012) notes the emergence of a formulaic pattern, particularly among females, of rejecting a compliment in PenSp: *¡qué va!* ('no way!'). PenSp speakers in Maíz-Arévalo's (2012) corpus evaded compliments 28.5% of the time (p. 8).

There are no examples of male-male compliments in Maíz-Arévalo's (2012) study of PenSp (p. 8). She does note, however, differences in how males and females respond to compliments, keeping in mind that males in the study are responding to compliments from females exclusively, while females in Maíz-Arévalo's (2012) study are responding to compliments from both males and females. Maíz-Arévalo (2012) observes that males and females accept compliments at similar frequencies: 46% versus 44% (p. 10). The difference in behavior comes about with respect to the other options for responding to compliments. Male participants in her study favored evasion as a compliment response (54.5%) with rejection being the less preferred response (9%) (p. 10).

One interesting aspect of PenSp male compliment response behavior that Maíz-Arévalo (2012) notes is that males tend to be more original in their compliment responses (p. 15). There is not a lot of data for this idea, apart from one example, but the idea is present nonetheless (p. 15).

Example 2.1

A: *¡Qué bien hueles!* ('You smell so nice!')

B: *Mejor sepo* ('I taste even better.')

This example also highlights the idea of a male "enhancing" the compliment given to him, noting that this idea is not present in Holmes's (1986) compliment response taxonomy (p. 15). Lorenzo-Dus (2001) (see above) also notes a tendency in Spanish males to upgrade compliments, but again, this

happens in response to compliments given by females. While it is true that the concept of praise upgrade is not explicitly listed in Holmes's (1986) taxonomy, it is present in Herbert's (1986) taxonomy as a form of agreement, and therefore not a new finding exclusive to compliment responses in Spanish.

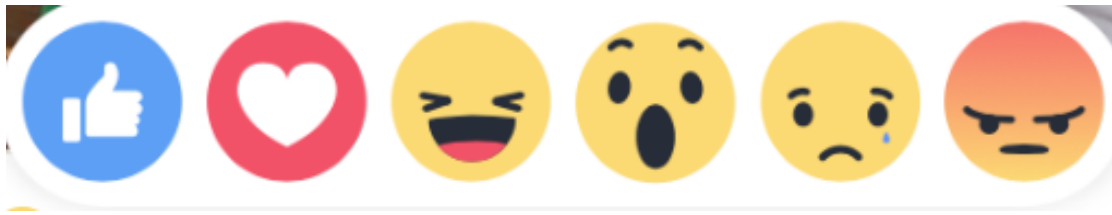
2.4.3 Compliment response studies on social networking sites

Studies on compliments in social media are emerging as technology develops, and studies on compliment responses have followed suit (for a comprehensive overview of compliment response studies on social media, see Placencia and Lower, 2017). Current compliment response studies on social media cover AmE, English as a lingua franca, Malaysian English, Malay, Persian, and PenSp. Of these studies, three focus on compliment responses on FB, one on Twitter, and one on Second Life (SL).

2.4.3.1 Social media specific forms of compliment response

Social media platforms provide new ways to respond to compliments, with each platform having its own method, such as 'like' on FB or clicking a heart icon on Twitter or Instagram. Emoticons are also available across platforms. FB has increased the functionality of its 'like' button by offering users a variety of responses, in addition to the ubiquitous 'like': a series of emoticons correlating to these written responses: Like, Love, Haha, Wow, Sad, and Angry (shown from left to right in Figure 2.1). These expanded options with 'like' were not available on FB at the time the data was collected for the current study.

Figure 2. 1 FB's response options



2.4.3.1.1 Emoticons

Interpreting the meaning behind the affordances of social media technology is up for debate. Dresner and Herring (2010) argue that emoticons are not graphical depictions of emotion, but “indications of the illocutionary force of the textual utterances that they accompany” (p. 255), and serve as support for the accompanying text. This explanation fits well when an emoticon accompanies text, but how to treat an emoticon when it appears on its own has been a point of divergence in the studies listed in this section. Dresner and Herring (2010) classify stand-alone emoticons as either “expressions of emotion that map iconically onto body movements, such as smiling or frowning,” or they can be considered as performances of illocutionary acts (p. 258). This is the same idea that Placencia (2019) relies on for classifying emojis occurring along with compliments as supportive moves.

Dresner and Herring’s (2010) treatment of emoticons is a helpful starting point for fitting them into the existing taxonomies of compliment responses. Authors of compliment studies on SNSs discussed here vary significantly in how they classify emoticons. Cirillo (2012) and Siti Yuhaida and Tan (2014) do not explicitly discuss whether they encountered emoticons in their studies, and how they treated any emoticons that surfaced. Emoticons appear in Cirillo’s table of

response strategies, which gives examples of responses found in her data (2012: 50-51). The reader may assume that Cirillo (2012) fitted emoticons into Herbert's (1986) taxonomy. This treatment of emoticons supports Dresner and Herring's (2010) idea of an emoticon as illocutionary support. Alternatively, given that Cirillo (2012) and Siti Yuhaida and Tan (2014) do not explicitly discuss emoticons, it is possible that they may have disregarded them entirely, and only focused on written responses.

Placencia et al. (2016), Maíz-Arévalo (2013), and Eslami et al. (2015) all create a new category within Holmes's (1986) taxonomy for stand-alone emoticons in response to compliments. This idea is something that does not receive much mention in face-to-face compliment studies: there is not a lot to analyze in terms of only a smile, for example, in response to a compliment. Placencia et al. (2016) argue that emoticons on their own in response to a compliment serve as an acceptance of a compliment. It is important to note here, however, that since the time of data collection and writing their study, technology for emoticons has advanced rapidly, and there is a much wider array of emoticons and emojis available apart from the standard text-based emoticons observed in Placencia et al.'s study. Although it did not happen in Placencia et al.'s (2016) study, the case for taking an emoticon as an acceptance to a compliment is muddled when the compliment is met with a negative emoticon response, for example, a frowning or angry face. Presumably this cannot be interpreted as an acceptance, and whether that sort of emoticon response would occur with respect to a compliment is uncertain, but the possibility remains. While they do give emoticons their own place within their iterations of Holmes's (1986) taxonomy, Maíz-Arévalo (2013) and Eslami et al. (2015) do not go so far

as to say that emoticons always express acceptance of a compliment, which could cover the scenario discussed above.

2.4.3.1.2 Facebook's 'like' function

Facebook and other social media platforms offer a simple method for reacting to photos and comments: 'like', the interpretation of which is subject to much debate. In their 2013 study of compliments on FB, Placencia and Lower argue that 'like' is an expression of approval or appreciation of another user. Placencia et al. (2016), in their study of compliment responses on FB further define FB's 'like' function as a type of compliment acceptance because 'liking' something is a positive evaluation of that thing (p. 348). Despite the fact that reasons for using 'like' can be fairly opaque, Placencia et al. (2016) give 'like' its own place as a sub-category of compliment acceptance.

Similar to their treatment of emoticons, Maíz-Arévalo (2013) and Eslami et al. (2015) give 'like' its own place in their respective taxonomies, but they do not classify it as an explicit acceptance, instead viewing it as an implicit response or a non-verbal response. Contrast this with what Maíz-Arévalo (2010) labels as "creative" or implicit compliments. There seems to be nothing creative about clicking the 'like' button on FB in response to a compliment. This classification of 'like' as an implicit response is also slightly confusing, as Maíz-Arévalo (2013) asserts that the use of 'like' on its own in response to a compliment is a polite acknowledgement of the compliment and a demonstration of appreciation for it (p. 64). However, if it is a demonstration of appreciation then it is bound to represent acceptance of the compliment. Or to put it another way, use of 'like' is

akin to accepting a compliment. Eslami et al. (2015) state that when used alone or when combined with emoticons, 'like' is a form of compliment acceptance (p. 256). However, when used in combination with verbal compliment responses, 'like' simply functions as an external modifier.

Similar to the face-to-face studies, researchers of compliment responses on social media have used either Holmes's (1986) or Herbert's (1986) taxonomy to classify those responses, though each study has modified existing taxonomies to varying degrees to suit its needs. Briefly, the current studies are split approximately down the middle with Placencia et al. (2016), Maíz-Arévalo (2013), and Eslami et al. (2015) adopting various iterations of Holmes's (1986) taxonomy, while Cirillo (2012), and Siti Yuhaida and Tan (2014) follow their own iterations of Herbert's (1990) taxonomy. The researchers following Holmes (1986) have modified her taxonomy to fit the needs of their data, and what remains are Holmes's (1986) three overarching categories of accept, reject, and deflect or evade. How to account for the affordances of social media technology (for example, FB's 'like' and emoticons) causes divergence between the three studies. Placencia et al. (2016) assert that elements such as emoticons are a close enough approximation of real-life phenomena to warrant treating them as they would be treated in a face-to-face context. Maíz-Arévalo (2013) and Eslami et al. (2015) argue that emoticons and the "like" function are implicit or non-verbal responses, respectively.

Placencia et al. (2016) examine compliment responses on FB among female Americans, using the same corpus as Placencia and Lower (2013), which yielded 1,057 compliments and 1,346 'likes'. They found that the majority of compliments observed in their data (81%) did not elicit a response. This rather

unexpected finding led them to explore appropriateness of non-response behavior from the perspective of FB users by means of informal, semi-structured interviews of fifteen Midwestern American university students (ages 18-40) (p. 355-56). The interviews revealed a number of micro-social and other factors that appear to influence compliment response behavior on FB, including the degree of social distance between FB friends, the amount of time elapsed since the last communication with the FB friend, FB friends' level of sociability/activity (cf. Li 2007), with more or fewer replies produced depending on how active or social people are on FB; and the place on FB where the comment was posted. For some interviewees, providing a reply could be perceived as fishing for more compliments, while others regard it as an imposition to themselves if there are too many comments to reply to, or as an imposition to the person who originally gave the compliment, as well as to others who have commented, as they may receive notifications of subsequent comments.

With respect to the compliments that did get a reply (205 compliments or 19% of the 1,057 instances), Placencia et al. (2016) found that acceptance was the most frequent form of response (79%), followed by evasion (17%) (p. 350). Only 4% of responses corresponded to the 'rejection' category. These results on the whole are in line with results from other studies on compliment responses in English (cf. Holmes, 1986). It should be noted that 'like' as a response to compliments, unlike Maíz-Arévalo (2013) (see below), was included under Holmes's acceptance category as the authors consider it to be a positive evaluation, suggesting acceptance of the compliment that could reasonably be interpreted as a token of appreciation or an agreement. Likewise, emoticons such as smiley faces, which also suggest acceptance of a compliment, were placed

under this category. Placencia et al. (2016) note that a high proportion of the responses examined contained multiple strategies. They suggest that this phenomenon might be due to the medium, in that FB users may be condensing into one turn what might have taken place over several turns of a spoken conversation.

Cirillo (2012) looked at compliment responses in Second Life (SL) in her corpus, which consisted of 74 pairs of compliments and responses. She was interested in exploring the shape that responses take in a context like SL, where English is used as a lingua franca and where participants' identities are hidden behind avatars. A study conducted in a setting such as SL is notable because traditional macro-social factors such as gender and age are not easily discernable for either the participants or the analyst. An additional dimension is that SL users typically do not know each other in real life, unlike most connections on FB. Cirillo (2012) based her analysis on Herbert's (1989) taxonomy, with some adjustments: Herbert's overall categories of acceptance and rejection suited her data, but she did not find any instances of 'other interpretations'. Additionally, she added the sub-category of non-agreement for instances of irony. Cirillo found that compliments were more likely to be accepted than rejected (p. 53), in line with a number of previous studies such as Holmes (1986). That said, Cirillo found some variation in the use of sub-strategies that could be attributed to the medium (SL) and the context of the interaction. For instance, she found a higher incidence of appreciation tokens (45.95%) compared with findings from other studies such as Holmes (1986), explaining these occurrences by reference to Brown and Levinson's work where they suggest that an increase in social distance results in greater politeness (p. 53). Another noteworthy feature from

Cirillo's (2012) study was the frequent appearance of the category 'no occurrence' (27.3%) which is not often seen in studies conducted in face-to-face settings, but observed frequently in studies conducted on SNS, notably in Placencia et al. (2016) (see also Herbert, 1986 and 1989, with respect to face to face studies). Cirillo (2012) observes that the non-response strategy is a way for participants to deal with the conflict between agreement and modesty and that SL allows participant to evade politeness rules (p. 53).

Maíz-Arévalo (2013) attempts to address the question of how interlocutors are expected to respond to compliments online, given the differences between conditions in face-to-face and online interactions. Using her classification of compliment responses in PenSp (Maíz-Arévalo, 2012) as a starting point, the author explores how these patterns of responses are transferred to an online environment. She examines a corpus of 177 compliments in PenSp on FB and finds that while responses to compliments online resemble findings in face-to-face settings, there are significant differences, namely those response possibilities provided by technology.

In Maíz-Arévalo's (2013) FB study, only 28.7% of responses in the were similar to those in her 2012 study, which leaves 71.3% of responses in Maíz-Arévalo's 2013 study unclassified, demanding a new, supplemental system of classification for online compliment responses. She adds the categories of implicit response and no response to her taxonomy, which account for 41.3% and 30% of responses, respectively. Under implicit response, the author includes the use of emoticons (3%) and the use of FB's 'like' (38.3% of cases). What Maíz-Arévalo (2013) does not explain or place within her taxonomy is the use of emoticons or 'like' when used along with a textual response. When these

mechanisms occur alone, she has labeled them as implicit response, but they seem to receive no treatment when co-occurring with text. Placencia (2019) treats the use of emoticons and 'likes' when co-occurring with text as supportive moves. Placencia et al. (2016) classify these co-occurrences as a sub-category of acceptance (p. 346).

Eslami et al. (2015) examine compliment response behavior on FB among Iranian Persian speakers. The study is based on a corpus of 497 compliments and any corresponding responses, taken from 45 profiles of 27 males and 18 females (ages 23 to 39), with an average of 11 compliments per participant. The compliments selected for study came from one self-picture randomly selected from each participant profile. The authors sought to explore the linguistic and non-linguistic tools that Iranian users of FB use in compliments and compliment responses, the impact of sex on usage, as well as the extent to which patterns of compliment response on FB resemble or differ from that observed in face-to-face interaction.

With respect to the linguistic and non-linguistic tools used, the authors found that what they describe as non-verbal responses (use of emoticons and 'like'), as well as the absence of a response were more frequent occurrences than verbal responses. Concerning verbal responses, Eslami et al. (2015) found that strategies such as evading or rejecting a compliment, commonplace in face-to-face interaction, were used infrequently on FB, noting that agreement strategies were more common. In relation to who compliments whom and the kinds of responses given, unlike face-to-face contexts Eslami et al. (2015) found that on FB, women and men complimented each other on appearance, with women

accepting compliments both via linguistic and non-linguistic methods more often than men.

Siti Yuhaida and Tan (2015) examined compliment responses by Malaysian celebrities on Twitter. The authors examined responses by 20 male and 20 female celebrities. The languages examined on this Twitter study are English and Malay. Twitter, while a SNS, differs significantly from FB in that Twitter users were limited to 140 characters of text in any single post at the time this study was conducted (character limit on Twitter is now 280 characters), and Twitter accounts are generally public, i.e., a user often does not have to be accepted to follow another user's account.

In their research questions, Siti Yuhaida and Tan (2015) chose to focus on compliment functions and topics, compliment response patterns, and how gender influenced compliment response strategies (p. 82). In terms of compliment functions, the authors cite expressing admiration, establishing solidarity, expressing gratitude, softening a tight situation, starting a conversation, and reinforcing desired behaviors (p. 82). The authors based their categorization of compliment topics on those discovered in other studies, namely possessions, appearance, skills, and achievements (p. 82).

Siti Yuhaida and Tan (2015) present their findings on the function of compliments in terms of how often each function occurs, broken down by sex (p. 85). The authors explain that some compliments expressed admiration or established solidarity, but what they did not explain is how they determined that compliments performed these specific functions. The authors argue that their results demonstrate that both men and women most frequently use compliments in order to express admiration (p. 85). They also highlight that the majority of

compliments observed in their study relate to appearance, though all four compliment topics observed (appearance, possessions, ability (skills), and personality) appear at approximately the same rates (p. 86). The authors follow Herbert's (1990) taxonomy of compliment responses, which divides compliment responses into three main categories: agreement, non-agreement, and other interpretations, with each category encompassing several sub-categories (p. 82).

Table 2.8 is a collation of the results of compliment response studies on social media.

Table 2. 8 Results of digital compliment response studies to date

	Placencia et al. (2016)	Maíz-Arévalo (2013)	Eslami et al. (2015)	Cirillo (2012)	Siti Yuhaida and Tan (2014)
Accept	15%	19.7%	79.7%	54.1%	77.27%
Reject	1%	1.1%	1%	4.1%	1.81%
Evade	3%	7.9%	2.4%	24.2%	18.61%
No response	81%	30%	16%	17.4%	2.27%
Implicit response	-	41.3%	-	-	-
Combination	-	-	.6%	-	-

The studies listed in Table 2.8 appear to have very few similarities, save that they are conducted via social media. The largest commonality is how frequently compliments are rejected: this is fairly constant across the five studies. Even when one compares similar studies, the results vary widely. For example, Placencia et al. (2016), Maíz-Arévalo (2013), and Eslami et al. (2015) all draw their corpus from FB and use a form of Holmes's (1986) taxonomy to classify compliment responses. One might guess that this could lead to similar results, but the data show that this is simply not the case. Similarly, Placencia et al. (2016) and Cirillo (2012) both use an English language corpus (though they

are presumably different varieties of English). This still did not lend itself to similar results; in fact, the results of these two studies vary wildly.

The differences in the corpora of the studies listed above may assist in explaining the diverging results reported. The most obvious differences are in languages studied, and which social media platform was used to study those languages. Sex may also play a part: Placencia et al.'s (2016) study focuses solely on women, whereas Maíz-Arévalo (2013) examines both men and women. Another example is Siti Yuhaida and Tan's (2014) study, which reports an extremely low rate of *no response* (2.27%, sharply contrasting with Placencia et al.'s 81% non-response rate). This however, may be explained by the fact that Siti Yuhaida and Tan's corpus consists of celebrities, who may be required to present a responsive public persona. Perhaps more mechanically, differences in results could be explained by varying methods of collecting data in the studies. See Chapter 3 for a full discussion of methodologies in compliment and compliment response studies.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have given an overview of the trajectory of compliment (Manes and Wolfson, 1981) and compliment response studies (Pomerantz, 1978) from the early stages to present day studies that are based in online contexts. While this review of past studies has been detailed, it builds primarily on studies of compliments and compliment responses in the Spanish language, specifically EcSp and PenSp. Additionally, studies of compliments and responses on SNSs, particularly those conducted on FB, are particularly relevant and have received much emphasis.

The next chapter (Chapter 3) focuses on methodology, giving an overview of methodologies used in compliment and compliment response studies. This overview is followed by a detailed description of the methodology developed for the current study, including a discussion of handling vast quantities of data made available by studies conducted on SNSs, such as FB.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 2, research on compliments and compliment responses is extensive and has been ongoing for decades. A significant part of that research that is often glossed over is the methodology used in the study. While it is true that past studies give at least a cursory description of the method used in conducting their research, I argue that discussion of research methodologies merits much more attention than it currently receives. Particularly, research methodologies in the rapidly growing realm of Internet pragmatics research deserve adequate attention.

In this chapter, I give an overview of the main methodologies for conducting politeness research, and a brief description of how these methodologies have been deployed in past studies. I also discuss how methodologies have been used and adapted in studies in CMC thus far, pointing out any weak points in these methodologies. Next, I discuss my research questions and the methodology developed to investigate them. I detail how I began my research, and the factors influencing how I shaped my study methodology.

3.2 An overview of methods for conducting pragmatics research

3.2.1 Armchair method

Jucker (2009), citing Clark and Bangerter (2004), offers an overview of the three basic methods for conducting pragmatics studies: armchair, field, and

laboratory (2009: 1615). The armchair method refers to philosophical research, which does not rely to actual language data, but instead focuses on the theoretical workings of a language. Within the armchair method, Jucker distinguishes between philosophical research, based on the intuition of the researcher, and interviews designed to elicit opinions of speakers of the language being studied. Jucker points out that early studies of speech acts were largely philosophical. I will not go into much detail about the philosophical side of the armchair approach, as current pragmatics research does not engage much with this strand of research any longer. Interviews, however, are frequently used (cf. Placencia et al., 2016), and should be distinguished from the laboratory approach involving the use of tools like discourse completion tests (DCTs), as interviews are intended to ascertain attitudes and opinions about an aspect of language by speakers of that language. Laboratory work, on the other hand, gives access to elicited samples of the language being studied. Field research involves empirical investigation and analysis of naturally occurring data.

Jucker suggests that all research on compliments must necessarily begin with the armchair method, that is, a researcher must set the parameters of a study, determining what constitutes a compliment and what does not. Researchers then typically progress their studies with either the field method or the laboratory method.

3.2.2 Field method

According to Jucker (2009), the field method is one that observes only naturally occurring data. He points out that the critical feature of data collected via the field method is that the researcher has not elicited the data, and that it

involves language used for communicative purposes, those purposes being separate from the aims of the research. Data collected via the field method is typically spoken, though Jucker points out that written language that has been written for the purposes of communication is also acceptable. This is crucial for CMC studies, as the language under observation is in written form, rather than spoken.

Within the field method, Jucker describes four different approaches to obtaining data: the notebook method, the philological method, the conversation analytical method, and the corpus method (p. 1616). The notebook method is frequently used in compliment studies (cf. Manes and Wolfson (1981); Holmes (1986); and Herbert (1986) for examples of compliment studies that rely on the notebook method for gathering a corpus). When conducting research via the notebook method, also referred to as an ethnographic approach by Manes and Wolfson (1981), the researcher takes notes of compliments that she hears in her daily life, often enlisting other researchers to help by observing and noting compliments that they encounter in their daily lives (Jucker 2009: 1616). The benefit of this approach, as well as using multiple researchers to gather data, is that a lot of information can be collected easily and quickly. There are some problems with this method, however, as Rees-Miller (2011) points out, particularly that the types of compliments that are collected can be heavily influenced by the researchers' own biases. Boyle (2000) refers to this method as a "reduced" ethnographic method, due to its focus on the near-exclusive collection of explicit compliments, rather than both implicit and explicit compliments (p. 28). The participant-observer aspect of the notebook method can also be troubling: it is difficult to deny that when the researcher is an

'outsider' to the group under observation (i.e., a person who has been given access to the group for purposes of research), her presence may influence the data produced, despite time taken to by the researcher to integrate into a group. This is not to say that all data gathered by a participant-observer is necessarily invalid; sometimes it is the only way to gather information about certain groups. Participant-observer researchers often spend considerable lengths of time with the communities that they are researching in order to gain a deeper understanding. The trouble can arise when subjects are aware that they are being observed (and they must, as they must give consent), which can change their natural behavior, even if they are not aware of the object of the study. However, as highlighted by Placencia (2004:220), one's involvement in conversations necessitates full attention, thereby minimizing the impact of a researcher's presence. Overall, the notebook method is a valuable tool, and can yield a large corpus, but researchers need to be aware of their potential impact on subjects' behavior and do what they can to minimize this impact. Additionally, the notebook method is not particularly effective for capturing paralinguistic cues, such as facial expressions or tone of voice, and the notebook method leaves a good deal of room for error in recording precisely what has been said, as it relies heavily on accuracy of memory and notation.

The philological method of compliment studies, also under the umbrella heading of field research, is one in which the researcher reads data, typically fictional material, and notes all examples of compliments found in the material (Jucker p. 1616). Bruti (2006) used this method in her study of implicit compliments in films as conveyed in film subtitles. Advantages of this method are that fictionalized interactions are often based on real life experiences. An

additional advantage is that sources are easily available to multiple researchers for collaboration and harmonizing interpretations, and that source materials can be reviewed again and again. Jucker (2009) mentions that such sources provide compliments for analysis at multiple levels, including compliments from the author to a perceived reader, as well as compliments between fictional characters (p. 1616). While it is probably true that at times, authors can intend to compliment readers, it is too tenuous to provide a valuable data source for study; there is too much assumption involved with little to support it. Analyzing dialogue between characters in a work of fiction, on the other hand, is more legitimate as it shows idealized interactions, which are based on real life. Additionally, works of fiction are often narrated, which can provide insight into a character's thoughts and interpretations of an interaction.

Unlike the philological method, the conversation analysis method of compliment study involves the use of naturally occurring data, which is recorded and transcribed. The researcher examines the transcripts and extracts any compliments that occur. This method is time consuming and does not always yield many samples for analysis (p. 1616). Jucker concedes that in order for the conversation analysis method or the philological method to be viable, there must be a searchable corpus from which to gather material. He chooses to keep the conversation analysis and philological methods as two separate methodologies, reserving the corpus method to encompass electronic corpora that can be searched by computer. He notes that both the philological method and the conversation analysis methods involve manual searching for examples of compliments. I would argue that this is not necessarily the case; there are countless e-books that are electronically searchable, and I do not agree that

transcripts are necessarily less searchable, electronically, than an electronic corpus. Furthermore, as I discuss below in relation to the current study, electronic corpora are sometimes nearly impossible to search electronically.

Jucker's (2009) distinction between the philological method, conversation analysis, and the corpus method is arbitrary, in my view, insofar as Jucker describes these three methods. There are not clear distinguishing lines between the three as presented by Jucker (2009): they overlap and are essentially identical methodologies. While it is true that if a researcher uses a text-based corpus (i.e., one that is only available in print and not electronically), the researcher must spend time combing the text for occurrences of his research objective. This is not something that a researcher has to do with an electronic corpus per se, as this researcher can deploy search commands in order to pick out extracts from his corpus. That said, as the corpus in the current study demonstrates, there is enormous variety in the way naturally occurring, electronic speech occurs, including spelling errors and alternative spelling of words, to name but a few.

The field method, favored due to its ability to study the closest approximation to naturally occurring data, is not without its limitations. For example, Jucker suggests that in the field method, one must rely on the ability of researchers to identify and record a compliment when they hear one. Furthermore, researchers who use the notebook method in the field may miss utterances, or misremember when writing them down. If a researcher is simply noting what he hears, it may not be completely correct, and may be influenced by pre-conceived notions of how a compliment in a given setting should look.

Rees-Miller (2011) suggests that data collection via the field method can further be affected by the sex of the researcher, which can impact both the setting where data is collected as well as the actual data that is produced (see also Holmes, 1988). In her 2011 study, Rees-Miller compares two data sets of compliments collected in similar environments (small US university campus) by similar researchers (undergraduate students) from two different years. Rees-Miller (2011) found that the two data sets varied considerably based on the setting in which the compliment occurred, setting being something that is heavily dependent on choice of the researcher. These results demonstrated that research conducted by observational or field methods can be influenced by the inherent biases of researchers manifesting themselves in the selection of settings under observation, as well as the actual settings or contexts themselves.

3.2.3 Laboratory Method

The laboratory method of compliment research involves a researcher using various techniques in order to prompt a response from the participants (Jucker 2009:1618). The two principal methods for this are via discourse completion tests (DCT, also called discourse completion task) and role-play scenarios. The original version of the DCT method is one in which the participant is provided with a short dialogue with one utterance missing, which the participant then must complete. The DCT method was used by Blum-Kulka et al. in their 1989 study of the speech acts of request and apology. One major advantage of the DCT is that it enables the researcher to administer many tests to many participants relatively quickly. Discourse completion tests are not above critique, however, one criticism being that they put participants into unfamiliar

scenarios, and that, given that participants are provided with the next turn, they are heavily constrained as to what they may say (Golato, 2003:92). Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 274) give an example of such a scenario in Example 3.1.

Example 3. 1 DCT example (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989:274)

In a crowded non-smoking compartment

David S. is going by train from London to Manchester. In Watford another passenger enters the non-smoking compartment and takes the last available seat. After a while he lights a cigarette.

David S.:_____

Passenger: Okay, I'll put it out

In this example, the participant would be playing the role of David S. and writing what he might say in this scenario (i.e., a request), keeping in mind the passenger's response of agreeing to put the cigarette out.

Jucker (2009: 1618) notes that more recently, researchers have been conducting DCTs orally to take into account that people generally do not speak the same way they write, which relates to Golato's (2003:92) point about written DCTs measuring symbolic action, rather than pragmatic action.

Mack and Sykes (2009) use an e-DCT, which is an oral DCT, conducted online. Participants using an e-DCT hear what their interlocutor said and then record their response (p. 312). Still, even oral DCTs attract criticism because the method does not allow negotiation between interlocutors, as would be the case in real life, face-to-face interactions (Jucker 2009: 1618).

In the role-play method of laboratory research, the researcher sets up scenarios for the participants, and the participants must then communicate with each other in their designated roles within the specified scenario. Jucker draws a

distinction between role-plays and role enactments: the former is one in which participants may find themselves in a role that is outside their real life (see Kasper, 2000, and Golato, 2003 for a discussion of problems with this approach). In the role enactment method participants engage in roles that are part of their normal, everyday lives (p. 1618-19).

The limitation of the laboratory method is that the data produced is engineered by researchers and therefore does not necessarily occur naturally. The data produced is a perception of what the appropriate interaction is; however, in an example highlighted by Golato (2003: 92-93), idealized interactions are not necessarily a reflection of what happens in real life scenarios—a good example of which is compliment responses. Parents typically teach their children to say ‘thank you’ when responding to a compliment, but as Pomerantz (1978) discovered, ‘thank you’ is not a common response to compliments in AmE. Of course, researchers may be interested in studying so-called ideal interactions, or perhaps in comparing these with naturally occurring interactions.

My concern with the laboratory method is that scenarios are generated that are based on categories of compliments that have already been established by other researchers. This essentially forces compliments into pre-existing categories, rather than observing what people actually produce. Variables are controlled and topics of compliments do not flow naturally from the data collected; categories are pre-determined by the researchers in order to discover the aspects related to the objective of the research. This is not to say that setting up studies to elicit compliments on appearance, for example, are without merit.

It is merely another example of studying idealized interactions, rather than actual interactions.

It is also important to recognize that pre-determined compliment categories that have been extracted from compliment studies in one language often may not be applicable to studies in another language. Researchers must take into account cultural and linguistic differences and should avoid a 'one size fits all' approach when assigning compliment categories. When examining and comparing different cultures and languages in a laboratory setting, it is most beneficial to first approach a question via the field method (or at the very last base your study parameters in a previous study covering the same language and culture) in order to understand the types of situations that elicit compliments, and the topics of compliments that occur in each situation. Laboratory work can be used to deeply investigate phenomena observed via the field method.

Online and digital data adds a new dimension to these data gathering methods. Jucker (2018:17) highlights that past research made use of either written texts that were largely monologic and spoken words comprising dialogic utterances. Online data can be both, depending on the context. Jucker (2018) argues that communication via FB is "quasi-synchronous," due to users being able to exchange messages in quick succession. While this is true for the messenger portion of FB, for this to happen on a user's wall or photo album (where the current study's data is extracted from), users must be logged in and engaging in an exchange, which is not necessary. For this reason, I treat exchanges in this study as asynchronous.

Jucker (2018:17) notes that digital data also differs from written data in that it can be easily changed, which makes it difficult to return to sources to

check them. This was also highlighted in Placencia and Lower (2013). In the current study, I have been able to guard against such an occurrence to some extent by downloading all of the data into a database, discussed below in Section 3.5.2.

3.3 Methodologies in compliment studies in face-to-face settings

Manes and Wolfson (1981) assert that an ethnographic approach is the only credible method for studying compliments (115-16). The authors dismiss lab-based methodologies, such as DCTs or role-plays because these methods manifest perceptions about correct usages of language, rather than actual language usage. In their 1981 study, the authors explain that in order to collect their data, they used the participant observer method, in which both the authors themselves collected data, as well as university students in two separate universities, who were students in the researchers' classes. Manes and Wolfson (1981), along with their student research assistants, managed to collect a vast amount of data: 686 compliments (and presumably corresponding responses, though this is not stated). The authors argue that the variety of researchers involved in the data gathering was useful because it allowed for a large pool of varied data to be gathered. The data set in Manes and Wolfson's (1981) study does not focus on one group, for example, women in one geographic area, but instead contains both sexes and a wide range of ages, occupations, and educational attainment, and was collected in various geographic locations (p. 116). The researchers in Manes and Wolfson's study also took note of the sex of speakers, approximate ages, occupations, and the relationship between speakers, when this information was available.

Holmes (1986), like Manes and Wolfson (1981), is also a follower of the ethnographic approach to methodology in her study of compliments and compliment responses in NZE. Similar to Manes and Wolfson (1981), she took advantage of the availability of research students when gathering her corpus of 517 compliments and responses (Holmes 1986:488). Holmes's (1986) corpus contained a variety of interlocutors as well, though she states that the majority of speakers were adults of European descent. She does note that her corpus contains some examples by non-native English speakers, but excludes those from her quantitative analysis. Holmes (1986) is slightly more specific than Manes and Wolfson (1981) in her description of her approach to an ethnographic methodology: she explains that her research students were instructed to take note of the content as well as any relevant contextual details of the next twenty compliments they heard, without any sort of selection or censorship. Though she does not say explicitly, this presumably includes compliments in which the researchers are the recipients or givers of compliments.

Like Manes and Wolfson (1981) and Holmes (1986), Herbert (1986) conducts his study of compliment responses from an ethnographic perspective, using university students to help gather 1,062 compliment responses over the course of three years (p. 79). Herbert's methodology could be classified as a hybrid of fieldwork and lab work: he and his researchers collected both naturally occurring data, as well as data that resulted from researchers offering compliments in order to generate a response (p. 79). Herbert and his researchers noted the form of the compliment and the response. It is unclear what Herbert means by form, i.e., whether he is referring to the syntactic form, or the subject of the compliment, or something else altogether. In addition to the compliments

and the responses, Herbert and his researchers noted the sex and relationship between interlocutors, location, and whether bystanders were present. After the data were gathered, Herbert coded the responses according to his proposed taxonomy of compliment responses, with reliability checks performed by one research assistant. Herbert gives the following example of where researchers may take differing approaches to coding a compliment response (p. 80).

Example 3. 2 Variation in coding a compliment response (Herbert, 1986:80)

Female 2: Neat scarf.

Female 1: Isn't it funky? Kerin gave it to me.

Herbert classified this response as a reassignment of praise, relying on the second sentence of the response, but points out that the first sentence of the compliment response, "Isn't it funky?" could be classified as an acceptance.

Herbert does not go into detail about why the compliment response was coded as reassignment rather than acceptance. The reader is also left to wonder how Herbert selected the second sentence as the relevant portion of the compliment response for coding, and why he did not code for use of multiple strategies.

Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez (2013) used a variation of the DCT, a dialogue construction questionnaire (Schneider 2008), in order to gain some insight into compliments between women in EcSp and PenSp (see Chapter 2.3.2). A dialogue construction questionnaire differs from a discourse completion task in that the dialogue construction questionnaire asks participants to recreate a whole conversation as they imagine it would happen, rather than to produce a single speech act within a rigid scenario (p. 106). Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez were able to obtain two speech acts from participants: a compliment and a compliment response (p. 106). They state that this method is

advantageous because it helps eliminate doubt over the function of the first statement: the response helps to clarify how the first statement should be interpreted (p. 106). However, the authors highlight that this method, like the DCT, gives access to informants' perceptions of appropriate behavior and not actual uses.

Before embarking on their study, Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez (2013) used a pilot questionnaire with ten participants from each research location (Quito and Seville), in order to ascertain whether the selected situations would be sufficient to generate compliments (p. 107). The authors then administered their dialogue construction questionnaire to 40 female university students from each location. While they could not easily control for socio-economic levels in the Spanish group due to the absence of universities that charge high fees as exist in Quito, the authors tried to find a university in Quito that was equivalent to a Sevillian one. The average age of participants in each group was 21 years old (p. 108).

Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez (2013) are clear about the limitations of dialogue construction questionnaires in that they tend to elicit only responses of what participants perceive to be appropriate (p. 108). However, they assert that there are some positives to counterbalance the disadvantages: the ability to control various variables and that it is a straightforward corpus gathering mechanism. Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez also point out that questionnaires of this type are good for generating the basic semantic formulae that are used in various speech acts in natural contexts (p. 108).

3.4 Methodologies of compliment studies in CMC

There are various studies that examine complimenting behavior on FB. For example, Maíz-Arévalo (2013) studied compliment responses on FB, and produced a study on compliments on FB with García-Gómez (Maíz-Arévalo and García-Gómez, 2013). Both studies discuss FB as a good place to observe compliments and responses that are naturally occurring, as opposed to data produced in a DCT or role-play scenario. Maíz-Arévalo (2013) contends that data gathering in an environment like FB is less demanding than in face-to-face research, though she does not say in what way. I agree with this in some respects: on FB, a researcher does not have to keep up with real life encounters, noting down interactions word for word, as well as noting context and things like facial expressions, transcribing later. Everything on FB is already written, the difficulty is primarily in managing the amount of data available.

In her study on compliments on FB, Maíz-Arévalo (2013) cites Netnography as her methodology, which is “a participant-observational research based in online field work [that] uses computer-mediated communications as a source of data to arrive at the ethnographic understanding and representation of a cultural or communal phenomenon” (p. 51). Her data for this study is comprised of compliments found on the FB ‘walls’ of people that she knows offline, whether directly or indirectly, and who lived in the same location as Maíz-Arévalo at the time of the study, in order to facilitate follow up interviews (p. 51).

Maíz-Arévalo (2013) argues that previous research supports the view that messages posted on the Internet are public acts, and that there is no need to take extraordinary precautions to protect participants, stating that because

participants' identities are not recorded, it is not technically human subject research (p. 51). Additionally, Maíz-Arévalo only used participants that were over 25 years old (ranging from mid-20s to mid-40s) and therefore not vulnerable (p. 51). She states that she informally gained consent from the participants, though does not give any details about this.

As in her study of compliments in the same year, Maíz-Arévalo and García-Gómez (2013) use FB as their medium in their study of compliment responses. The authors impart little wisdom about the provenance of the data for this study, apart from it having been gathered on FB. Maíz-Arévalo and García-Gómez do not state but rather imply that they focused on their own, personal FB networks for data extraction (p. 742-43). The data making up Maíz-Arévalo and García-Gómez's corpus was gathered a posteriori, meaning that the data was already part of a participant's FB page, produced before the study was instigated. After they authors gathered the data, they posted messages on participants' walls, informing them (and their FB friends), that the data had been collected (p. 743). No participants in Maíz-Arévalo and García-Gómez's study expressed disagreement with this. This strategy has positive and negative points: the positive is that data have not been affected by knowledge of research being conducted. However, the negative is that there is no certainty that participants read messages from the researchers; the participants were not actively required to manifest consent in some way. I do not believe that silence constitutes consent.

Placencia and Lower (2013) studied compliments on FB, and as a follow up, using the same data set, Placencia et al. (2016) studied compliment responses on FB. Placencia and Lower (2013) gathered compliments on FB from

ten randomly selected females (using a random number generator) from Lower's personal FB network. Lower wrote to the selected participants, explaining the study and asking permission to use compliments and responses on their photos but without revealing any personal information. The participants all gave consent via a FB messenger response. The authors copied and pasted each compliment into an Excel spreadsheet, along with a brief description of the photograph attracting the compliment, the location of the compliment (profile photograph or photograph from an album), the name and sex of the person making the compliment, the compliment response (if any), any follow up response from the original person giving the compliment, any 'likes' associated with the photograph, as well as the names and sexes of the people 'liking' the photograph. Placencia and Lower (2013) and Placencia et al. (2016) used all of the data gathered from those ten participants in their respective studies, rather than a smaller selection.

The data gathering method used by Placencia and Lower (2013) enabled the authors to collect a large amount of data: 1,057 compliments from 722 different people and 1,346 'likes' (p. 625). These figures do not reflect that the number of photographs and comments examined by the authors was substantially larger. This large amount of data on a relatively small sample of ten women demonstrates the vast quantity of data that is available for study within FB, and probably other social networks. The availability of large quantities is a double-edged sword, however, as it can make it difficult for the researcher to establish boundaries in data gathering (Hine 2009).

Placencia and Lower (2013) and Placencia et al. (2016) used Lower's personal FB network as the source for their data, and while this is not

problematic per se, it is not immune to criticism. It is often difficult to interpret the meaning behind textual communications, though it is easier to do this when the researcher knows the person or people making the comments. However, it could be difficult to prevent one's own thoughts and feelings about a person or a situation from influencing their judgment of an interaction.

Eslami et al. (2015) also used a researcher's personal network on FB to gain participants for their study of compliment responses. Participants were selected using a stratified random sample. The authors do not comment on why or how the sample was stratified, though it seems likely that the sample was stratified based on sex, given that they had 27 male and 18 female participants. We know that the male and female participants in this study are roughly similar in terms of age range, but apart from that, we know very little in terms of how homogeneous or heterogeneous the group is. While not problematic per se, it is useful for readers to have this knowledge to get a comprehensive understanding view of the study. The authors state that participants' consent was formally obtained through consent forms sent to participants through Facebook messenger, though the authors do not elaborate on how consent was given and collected from participants (p. 253).

The number of compliments in Eslami et al.'s sample is quite high at 497 (p. 253). This could be explained by the fact that the authors only selected profile photographs for analysis: only one profile picture from each participant, selected randomly. These 45 photographs yielded an impressive number of compliments *and* responses: on average, 11 compliment and response pairs per photograph. The largest problem with this study is that it only focuses on compliments on appearance, further narrowed to compliments on appearance in profile

photographs on FB, which users often select as a photo which shows them in their absolute best light. Users reasonably expect, or perhaps hope, for compliments on their profile photographs and may be more likely to respond to such compliments. This method may produce a skewed view of how people actually interact on FB. While this study demonstrates that Persian-speaking FB users receive and respond to a startling number of compliments on their appearance on FB profile pictures, we cannot make any real conclusions about how Persian-speakers behave on FB generally.

3.5 Methodology of the current study

Compliments have been widely studied across a variety of languages (see Chapter 2), but the current study provides a new perspective: compliments and compliment responses among men on SNSs. The social media platform that facilitated data creation for this project is FB, which had 2.32 billion monthly active users worldwide as of 31 December 2018⁵. Prior to starting this project, I conducted an exploratory study with María Elena Placencia of compliments on FB in AmE (Placencia and Lower, 2013) and compliment responses to compliments on FB in AmE (Placencia et al., 2016). These studies provided insight as to the feasibility of studying compliments on FB, and included a limited number of participants, with all the data collection done manually by copying and pasting comments from FB into an Excel spreadsheet. This process was time-consuming and demonstrated that using the same data collection method for the current study would not be feasible, as I wanted a sample size

⁵ From Zephoria.com, last accessed 13 February 2019. <https://zephoria.com/top-15-valuable-facebook-statistics/>

considerably larger than ten. In order to gather the large amount of data used in the current study, I used a program that was specifically written for this project, which automatically collected the data from FB. The program accessed participants' FB data (photos, comments, and 'likes') via my own research FB profile and allowed the data to be saved on my computer. The data were then used to populate a custom-made database, which stored the data for review and coding.

The data in this study are an extract from a much larger pool of data of both Ecuadorian and Spanish male and female FB users collected specifically for this project. The data pool that comprises the current study is vast and slightly overwhelming for one body of work, making a comprehensive comparison of men and women impossible within the space constraints of a thesis. Narrowing the focus of the study to men offers a new perspective on the study of compliments and responses. Additionally, narrowing the focus produced a manageable data pool. In the current study I provide a variational pragmatics view of male compliments and responses on FB to young men in Ecuador (Quito) and Spain (Andalusia).

3.5.1 Setting up the study

The exploratory study published in 2013 that I conducted with María Elena Placencia on compliments on FB in AmE demonstrated how the data gathering process on FB has the potential to be never-ending. In the 2013 study, the data was limited to a random sample of ten women only from my personal FB network. We then analyzed compliments and later compliment responses (see Placencia et al., 2016) from this sample. Despite the fact that the number of

participants was modest (10), these participants produced 1,057 compliments (Placencia and Lower, 2013:624) and 205 responses (Placencia et al., 2016:350). All of this data was manually entered into a database by copying and pasting and coded there. This method of data collection was suboptimal for a number of reasons: first and foremost, it took a very long time to copy compliments from FB and paste them into Excel. Some users had thousands of photographs (though not all of these attracted compliments) on their FB profiles. As these participants were from my personal FB network, I was the only researcher who had access to the data for purposes of collecting it and populating the database. It took weeks to trawl through each participant's photographs, copying and pasting every compliment and response, as well as noting when the photographs attracted 'likes'. The other large obstacle in this method of data gathering was that permanently capturing the context, i.e., photos and any other comments or captions occurring with photos, of each compliment was not possible. While I did manage to capture all of the compliments and responses associated with a photograph, I did not have a manner in which to include all of the photographs in the database, which was a simple Excel spreadsheet. Instead, I wrote a brief description of each photograph that attracted a compliment in order to provide a bit of context to aid in interpreting the compliment. This was helpful, but the original media motivating the compliment would have been much more helpful, particularly for my co-authors. It was often possible to access my FB profile to look at the photographs in case of any questions, however, only I could do this, and FB users often remove photographs and delete comments, thereby eliminating the source of the data altogether.

The result of the two exploratory studies in terms of methodology is that they enabled focus on improving data gathering strategies in order to best achieve the aims of gathering and storing large amounts of data, which allows for preservation of the original context of compliments and responses. I sought assistance from a computer programmer to write a program that could gather data automatically from FB and populate a customized database. This program solved the previous problem of having to copy and paste information from FB into an Excel spreadsheet: this was now done automatically. Additionally, the program captured all photographs (including the profile photographs of those making comments and 'liking' photographs) and stored them in the database. The program and database were written in 2012, at which time FB was a much more open platform and less monetized, allowing programmers easier access.

The data extracted from participants' FB profiles was standard demographic information (name, sex, hometown, current location) and all the photographs the participants had posted to their profiles, including wall photos, profile photos, and photos in albums. For each photograph, the program captured the title of the photo album (if any), the caption associated with each picture (if any), the number of 'likes' each photograph attracted, and all comments on each photo (including any edits), which includes the name, sex, location, and hometown of each commenter, when specified. Additionally, the program recorded the number of 'likes' associated with each comment. See Appendix A for a sample view of the database.

While the data gathering and storage program was being developed, I gathered participants for the study. In the two exploratory studies of compliments on FB, the data was gathered from my personal FB contacts. I did

not do this for the current study firstly because my FB network does not encompass Quito and Andalusia. Secondly, I was keen to avoid personal biases that could arise when studying one's own friends and acquaintances, choosing to study two cultures and languages completely different than my own.

In order to gather participants, I set up a new, research FB account in December 2011. I started searching for participants in Spain by using a female contact of mine from San Lucar de Barrameda, who was a student at the University of Seville. I wrote to her via my personal FB account explaining the project and asked if she would participate. She agreed, and from this initial contact, I gained more participants. I sent an introductory message to each potential participant, explaining the project, reproduced in Appendix B.

This same process was repeated in order to gain participants in Ecuador, specifically, in Quito. I do not have personal contacts in Ecuador, so my supervisor provided me with my first contact: a female university student within the stipulated age range, living in Quito. I emailed this woman, who agreed to participate and to encourage her friends to participate.

In addition to acquiring participants through personal contacts, I attempted to gain participants by contacting university professors in Seville and Quito. I drafted a flyer (see Appendix C), which I emailed to these professors, but this was not very successful; I only gained a handful of participants this way. Another method for gathering participants was via two FB groups associated with the University of Seville: *Los Filólogos Somos Necesarios* ('Philologists are Necessary') and *Delegación De Estudiantes De Filología* ('Delegation of Philology Students', currently known as *Filología Universidad de Sevilla*). I wrote to the administrator of both of these FB groups explaining my project, and asking

permission to join so that I could post my flyer on their FB pages, which both groups accepting, allowing me to gain several Andalusian participants.

I recorded all contact with potential participants in an Excel spreadsheet. The date that an introductory message was sent was recorded in the appropriate tab relating to that type of person, for example, Ecuadorian man, and when a friendship request was made and accepted, this was recorded, as well as assigning each participant an alphanumeric code (EM for Ecuadorian male, etc.). I attempted to limit the possibility of asking unsuitable candidates to be participants (i.e., wrong age range, etc.) by viewing their FB profiles before making initial contact, whenever accessible.

In order to make contacts, I sent many private messages on FB every day, which resulted in a temporary FB ban. Facebook mistook the large number of messages sent to people who had no obvious connections to me as spam. In order to regain access to my account, I had to pass a test, which entailed looking at photos from my contacts' photos and identifying the contacts in the photos. Obviously, this was not something that I was capable of, as I did not know these people. I attempted the test by studying any publicly available photos of the participants, but many participants' photographs were private, meaning they were only accessible by FB friends. I tried for several days but was never able to pass the test. I waited for one week before attempting to access my research FB profile again, at which point FB restored my access.

It was difficult to obtain female participants from Ecuador, despite having a semi-personal female contact. Out of hundreds of messages sent, I only gained one female Ecuadorian participant through unsolicited contact. The remainder of the female Ecuadorian participants came through the contact provided by my

supervisor. I had better luck getting Ecuadorian males agree to participate via unsolicited messages, though I also gained numerous male contacts through the aforementioned contact.

My initial aim was to get fifty women and fifty men from each country to take part in the study, but this was not possible due to the disproportionate interest in participation between Ecuador and Spain; I ended with a total of 94 Spanish participants (60 female, 34 male) and 50 Ecuadorian participants (18 female, 32 male). In hindsight, this was for the best as the number of participants that I did have yielded an enormous amount of data, which was at the limit of manageable. Although the number of Ecuadorian female participants was the lowest out of all four groups of participants, nearly all of the Ecuadorian women compensated for this with the number of photographs that they had each posted. It ended up being a moot point, as I finally chose to focus on a comparison between males, rather than females and males.

McKee and Porter (2009) argue that research in virtual environments cannot be limited to a researcher's neutral observation but requires the researcher's own participation in the world (a method followed by Cirillo, 2012), presumably so that the researcher can gain an inside view into the context of the virtual interactions. I disagree that a researcher's participation is always necessary in a virtual environment, and would go further in saying that FB is not a strictly virtual environment, as many of the interactions within are based on real life, or continuations of situations that occurred offline, for example, photos from a night out. While I created a profile to interact to an extent with participants (limited to answering questions about my research, and the area of research in general), there was no need to participate with them and use those

interactions as research data. Quite apart from that context, it is not an objective of my research. I am not interested in how young Ecuadorian and Spanish men interact with a middle-aged American woman. I do not classify myself as an observer, nor was I a participant-observer. I occupied a hybrid position of nominally being 'in' the group, but not so far 'in' so as to require my participation, nor was I far enough 'in' to influence any behavior. Additionally, all data examined here was produced before I established contact with the participants, thereby eliminating any danger of the observer's paradox. Furthermore, I was always completely transparent about my identity and general purpose of research, so there was no danger of the participants being deceived.

3.5.1.1 Ethical considerations

Before embarking on my research, I sought permission from the Department of Cultures and Languages at Birkbeck. I had to submit an ethics research approval form, detailing the research objectives, and how I intended to achieve them while adhering to ethical considerations. I submitted my proposal in September 2011 and received approval in November 2011.

In addition to research guidelines set out by the college, the current study also takes into account guidelines promoted by the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR). When studying content on the Internet, the AoIR advises consideration of the following: how public the venue is, and whether it carries with it the expectation of privacy and informed consent; ethical expectations already established by the venue; vulnerability of participants; whether form or

content is being examined; and the ethical expectations or assumptions of the participants.

Facebook's data policy states that it (FB) collects content and communication provided by users, which includes photos and comments⁶. The stated intention for collecting all this information is to provide and personalize their products to users, provide analytics and other business services to help advertisers, promote safety and security, communicate with users, and, finally, to research and innovate for social good. The data policy highlights to users that once a user provides content to a third party, that party is free to use it, on or offline. Essentially, this means that FB does not keep its users' content private.

The privacy policy that I followed in the current study is much stricter than FB's own data policy. The current project is heavily dependent on people's personal photos and the comments that they, their friends, and acquaintances make in relation to them. Many people have the mistaken impression that their words on the Internet and FB particularly are private, and while it would have been possible (and relatively easy) to obtain a sample for this project by gathering publicly accessible photos, I felt it important to first seek permission to use photos and comments, and to ask people whether they wished to participate, rather than taking public data. I ensured participants that I would not use any identifying information. I do not reproduce any photos here; instead I provide a brief description of the composition of photos used in examples.

All participants in the current study were legal adults at the time of data collection, thereby presumed capable of giving informed consent, and not

⁶ Facebook's data policy is accessible here: https://www.facebook.com/full_data_use_policy

vulnerable. If the data contained here were to be linked to them, it would be difficult to argue that it could cause harm, as the data is available to third parties already via FB. However, it is unlikely that any connections could be made between the information as presented here and the real-life participants. I have taken great care to describe photos in the most generic way possible, while conveying the gist of the photo. I have replaced any use of names and nicknames with generic terms. I have made every effort and taken great care to protect the identities of the participants, regardless of whether they themselves have protected their details on FB or the Internet more generally.

3.5.2 Obtaining a manageable sample

When starting the study, I set out to obtain as many participants as possible in order to conduct a large-scale comparison between Ecuadorian and Spanish men and women. I cast a wide net, intending to gather the maximum number of participants possible, in order to ensure a large and varied data set. This proved more difficult than originally anticipated, as Ecuadorian women were particularly cautious in joining the study. I ended with an approximately even number of male participants from the two groups and disproportionately more Spanish women than Ecuadorian women (62 Spanish and 17 Ecuadorian women versus 32 Spanish and 33 Ecuadorian men).

After examining the results of the data gathering, I narrowed the focus of the study to men only, both in terms of participants, and those interacting with the participants. This study does not take into account compliments given by women to the male participants; the focus here is male-male behavior.

In the current study I examine 33 male Ecuadorian participants and 32 male Spanish participants. Three of the Spanish participants had no photographs associated with their FB profiles that elicited compliments. Rather than exclude participants with no photos, I left them in for analysis, as it is not unreasonable to assume that some FB users do not receive compliments on photos. The number of participants is also lower than the original number gathered because some participants who initially consented to participate in the study later 'unfriended' my research profile. Though they did not explicitly state that they no longer wanted to participate, I concluded that they no longer wished to participate. It could easily be the case that when examining their friend lists, they could not recall who I was, and deleted me because of that. However, it would be inappropriate to make this assumption and deleted the data from those participants.

The Ecuadorian participants from this study are all from Quito and the Spanish participants are from Andalusia, and at the time of data collection ranged in age from 18-26. The Ecuadorian participants are a diverse group of men: some were university students, some were fathers, and some had served in the military. Some of the Ecuadorian participants are connected to each other, i.e., members of the same social network on FB, while others are alone in the study in terms of their connection to other participants. Appendix D shows how some of the Ecuadorian participants are connected. The majority of Spanish participants in this study attended the University of Seville, and many were students of Philology. Overall, the group of Spanish participants seemed largely homogenous.

When contrasting the sample size of the current study with sample sizes of similar studies, the sample size of the current study is comparable both in terms of the number of participants and in the number of compliments and compliment responses. Table 3.1 gives an overview of other compliment and compliment response studies on social media.

Table 3. 1 Comparison of compliment response studies in social media

Author(s)	Language	Location	Participants	Compliments	Responses
Cirillo (2012)	English (lingua franca)	Second Life	1633 words 382 turns	74	74
Maíz-Arévalo (2013)	Peninsular Spanish	Facebook	58 16291 words 1004 turns	177	177
Siti Yuhaida & Tan (2014)	Malaysian English and Malay	Twitter	40	220	220
Eslami et al. (2015)	Persian	Facebook	45	497	497
Placencia et al. (2016)	American English	Facebook	10	1057	205
Eslami et al. (2019)	Persian	Facebook	44	4,301	-
Lower (current study)	Ecuadorian Spanish (Quito) and Peninsular Spanish (Andalusia)	Facebook	56	800	183

In December 2012 when finished gathering participants, I used the custom FB data collector program to pull all the photos that each participant had posted to his or her FB account and populate my compliment analysis database with the following information: participant name and assigned alpha-numeric code, sex, location, home town, the photo and caption on the photo (if any), 'likes' received by each photo, as well as the name, sex, location, and home town of each

person 'liking' the photo, the album in which the photo appears, the date the photo was created (uploaded onto FB) and the date the photo was updated (where applicable), and the date the album was created and updated (see Appendix A for an extract from the database). Any photos that did not attract a comment were left out of the database. Photographs that only received a 'like' and no written comment were also left out of the database.

3.5.3 Coding the data

After populating the database, I coded each comment as either a compliment or a non-compliment. The male and female participants gathered for the current study in its initial planning phase produced 14,150 photographs with at least one comment. Some photographs had only one comment, some had tens of comments. I examined each photograph and read through each comment, trying to understand the overall context in terms of the photograph and the words, and made a judgment about whether the comment was a compliment, and if so, what category of compliment it covered. If the comment was a compliment, I then coded for the syntactic pattern used in that compliment.

Determining topics of compliments was fairly straightforward, as the literature on compliments is extensive and subjects of compliments are discussed at length (see Chapter 2). I coded compliments as falling within one of the following categories: appearance, possessions, ability, personality, friendship, kids' appearance, pets, compliments relating to somebody apart from the participant (i.e., a friend), reiteration of the original compliment, a participant complimenting his own photo, and a compliment response. The database is flexible enough to accommodate as many categories of compliments

as needed, and new categories can be added at any time. Comments that were not compliments were assigned their own code, which allowed for easy exclusion from data analysis.

While I did not add new categories of compliments as such, there were several interesting features that occurred repeatedly in the data alongside compliments, so I added codes for those within the compliment categories. An example of this is laughter: many participants and their FB friends included some written form of laughter, for example, *ja ja ja*, in their comments. As it was such a regular occurrence, I gave laughter a code of its own to see how often this form of online laughter occurred, and was especially interested in how often it occurred with compliments and compliment responses. Table 3.2 gives the compliment categories used in the current study, as well as additional interesting features that regularly occurred in the data.

Table 3. 2 Categories of compliments

1	Appearance
2	Possessions
3	Ability
4	Personality
5	Friendship
6	Child's appearance
7	Pets
8	Other compliment
9	No compliment
10	<i>Besos</i> ('Kisses')/ <i>abrazos</i> ('kisses')
11	<i>Bendiciones</i> ('blessings')
12	<i>Felicidades</i> ('Congratulations')/ <i>suerte</i> ('luck')
13	Ja ja – humor
14	Compliment response
15	Emoticon
16	Sarcasms/jokes
17	Reiteration of original compliment
18	<i>Te quiero (mucho)</i> ('I love you (very much)')
19	Term of endearment
20	Compliment own photo
21	<i>Ingrata</i> ('ungrateful')

22	Vos ('you')
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Although the items above in Table 3.2 fall in the compliment category area of the database, most are not related to compliment topics as such. However, as the database is flexible, it is possible to assign multiple codes to each comment. For example, the following compliment was assigned category 1 (appearance) and 19 (term of endearment).

Example 3. 3 Appearance compliment co-occurring with term of endearment

Photograph of EM9 posing with a female friend, making a rock-n-roll gesture with his hand

Male 1: *fUll rOcKeR pana bien bien**** ('total rockstar friend, good good***')

Category 19 (term of endearment) came about because within the data, people frequently called each other by nicknames or other affectionate terms. This code evolved to become forms of address, though its label in the database remains unchanged (see Chapter 4.5.3). Category 8 (other compliment) was assigned when a compliment was given to somebody in a photo apart from the participant (or a child related to the participant, or a pet). Many people, particularly women, used category 10 (*besos/abrazos*). This category is not manifested much in this study due to the exclusion of women, and when present, it typically takes the form of *abrazos* only. *Bendiciones*, category 11, is unique to the Ecuadorian participants. It is also used primarily by women, and not often in conjunction with compliments. I took note of it firstly because it's an interesting and unique feature, but also because it conveys a positive feeling. Category 12, *felicidades/suerte* and category 18, *te quiero (mucho)* are similar to category 11 in that while they are not compliments, they are expressions of positive feelings,

so I wanted to make note of them in order to gain a broad picture of how affectionate relationships are in these groups of people.

Category 17, reiteration of the original compliment, is an interesting one. One would expect it to show up solely in response to a compliment response, presumably a compliment response rejecting or disagreeing with a compliment. This was not always the case; it sometimes occurred on its own, after the original compliment, seemingly out of the blue. It also occurred in response to a comment from another person (not the participant). Category 20, complimenting one's own photo, occurred when the participant complimented his own photograph. This study does not discuss occurrences of self-praise, apart from compliment upgrades (see Chapter 4.6.2.1).

Coding 14,150 photos took several months. Since fully coding the data, I have done spot-checking by selecting a random point in the database and re-examining around 25 photos and comments to check whether my judgment on coding remains unchanged. As there were few compliment responses, each has been reviewed several times. Finally, writing this thesis has been a source of constant review of the data coding.

The coding process for syntactic patterns of compliments was less straightforward than coding the data for compliment category. When coding the syntactic patterns of compliments, I relied on the categories found in Manes & Wolfson (1981) as a starting point, and also referred to Placencia and Yépez Lasso's (1999) study of compliments in EcSp. I used Placencia and Yépez Lasso's (1999) syntactic patterns as a starting point because they were discrete and clear, listing patterns of compliments individually, rather than as broad types, with many variations included. While coding the data, I found other, new

categories that occurred repeatedly and added them to the list of syntactic pattern codes in the database. This was also necessary as the basis for coding syntactic patterns was tailored to AmE and EcSp, which did not fully suit the PenSp data. Table 3.3 gives the categories of syntactic patterns used to code the data:

Table 3. 3 Categories of compliment syntactic patterns

A	(NP) + V(+Intens) + ADJ/ADV
B	V (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV (+NP)
C	V (+NP) (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV
D	(Interj) + (qué) + ADJ/ADV (+Poss + NP)
E	(Interj) + (qué) + ADJ/ADV (+que + V)
F	Qué (+ADJ) + NP (+que + V)
G	(Intens) + ADJ/ADV
H	Cómo + V
I	NP + gustar/fascinar/encantar
J	Implicit compliment
K	No compliment
L	NP
M	Other language
N	Compliment response
O	Qué + NP + tan/más + ADJ
P	NP + ADJ/ADV
Q	Other
R	Qué + ADJ/ADV
S	ADJ/ADV + NP
T	Tan...como
U	ADJ/ADV + V (+NP)
V	V + NP

Syntactic patterns A-C, from Table 3.3 were the ones that occurred most frequently in Placencia and Yépez Lasso's (1999) study of EcSp, occurring 34.96% of the time in their data (p. 105). Although not written in precisely the same way, category A is nearly identical to the most frequently occurring category in Manes and Wolfson's (1981) study of AmE: NP (is/looks) (really) ADJ (p. 121). Placencia and Yépez Lasso (1999) counted the different iterations represented by categories A-C as essentially the same form. While I agree that

they are essentially the same, in the database I could code them separately, and did so simply out of interest. The same is true for categories D and E: Placencia and Yépez Lasso (1999) treat them as the same syntactic pattern for the purpose of analysis.

Patterns F, H, and I (Table 3.3) also occurred in Placencia and Yépez Lasso's (1999) study of EcSp, which is why they are included here. Pattern G is slightly different than what Placencia and Yépez Lasso (1999) observed; they have the pattern of *tan* + ADJ. I did not encounter this precise pattern, but the similar (Intens) + ADJ.

Placencia and Yépez Lasso (1999) classify noun phrases as indirect compliments (p. 107). I created a separate category for all indirect compliments (category J), as well as a separate category for compliments that consist of a noun phrase. I am not counting compliments made up of a noun phrase as an indirect compliment, because I think that their meaning is clear. Examples 3.2 and 3.3 demonstrate how a noun phrase is easily recognizable as a compliment.

Example 3. 4 Noun phrase compliment

Photograph of SM12 reading a book

Male 1: *ese poeta!!* ('that poet!!')

SM12: *No! Di mejor, ese pseudofilólogo! :) ('No! More like, this pseudo-philologist! :)')*

Example 3. 5 Noun phrase compliment

Photograph of a piece of artwork done by EM26

Male 1: *arte, mijo! felicidades* ('art, my boy! Congratulations')

I created a category for compliments and responses realized in other languages apart from Spanish; these primarily consisted of compliments in French, Italian, and English. At the point of coding the data, I was unsure of whether to include them because I could understand the majority of them, and translate the ones I could not understand. I have excluded them from analysis because the focus of this work is compliments and responses in Spanish by Spanish-speakers, though such compliments could contribute to future studies.

Patterns O-T are ones that I added because they surfaced frequently enough in the data to warrant their own classification. Syntactic pattern P is very similar to pattern J, only with the addition of an adjective. These two patterns could be combined in discussion, but I tried to keep coding as accurate as possible, despite any similarities in patterns. Pattern P, NP + ADJ, and pattern S, ADJ + NP, are essentially the same, but again, I thought it may be useful to treat them separately in coding.

The following examples are samples of categories O, R, and T, as they are easier to understand within examples.

Example 3. 6 Syntactic pattern O: Qué + NP + tan/más + ADJ

Photograph of EM13's newborn daughter.

Male 1: *que nena tan tierna* ('what a sweet baby')

Example 3. 7 Syntactic pattern R: Qué + ADJ/ADV

Photograph of SM22.

Male 1: *Qué guapito :)* ('how handsome')

Example 3. 8 Syntactic pattern T: Tan...como

Photograph of EM8 in his firefighter uniform.

Female 1: *ichi..... tan dindo como 100pre* ('as handsome as ever')

I have included pattern T here just out of interest; it did not occur in either the EcSpn or PenSp male-male data.

3.5.4 Managing the data

Once all the compliments were coded, I exported all of the data to an Excel spreadsheet. I chose to use Excel for data analysis because its data analysis capabilities suited my needs. I used pivot tables in order to compare various pieces of data. I pared down and rearranged data to suit the purpose of this study: compliments from males to males, and any resulting responses.

Compliments from women to men, women to women, and men to women were all excluded from analysis. The original photographs were not exported to Excel, but remained in the database to enable checking the proto provoking a compliment. After spending months in the data, I could often visualize a photo in question, not only because I have spent so much time on the data coding, but because when viewing the lives of others as an outsider, you pay more attention to the exchanges.

I considered interviewing participants as a means of following up with the study, and as a chance to gain some insight as to why participants behaved in certain ways as observed in the study. Ultimately, I decided not to conduct interviews for a number of reasons. While it would be interesting to interview some participants, I am not convinced that it would allow for any accurate insight as to why they engaged in certain patterns of behavior. The data was gathered seven years ago, and some of the gathered data was produced more than seven years ago. Even if users could remember making a comment and why they made a particular comment, I fear that hindsight, as well as knowing the

aim of the study, would cloud their views. I am not interested in knowing what people think they should be doing, but rather in observing what they have actually done. Apart from that, in my previous joint study on compliment responses (see Placencia et al., 2016), interview data revealed what people thought was the appropriate response behavior on FB, rather than what they actually do themselves. Indeed, interviews seemed a bit muddled as to why they behaved in particular ways on FB (Placencia et al., 2016: 357-59). That said, interviews could provide an interesting point of contrast in a future study between what people actually do and what they think should be done.

3.5.5 Coding compliment responses

To code compliment responses, I used Holmes's (1986) taxonomy of compliment responses for this data, because it provided the best fit for this data, despite the original taxonomy being developed for compliment responses in English. It was not a perfect fit though, and I added a few subcategories, particularly due to affordances of technology, such as 'like' and emoticons.

First level responses to a compliment, according to Holmes's (1986) taxonomy are: accept, reject, or deflect or evade the compliment (p. 492). Within each greater category, there are a number of sub-categories or strategies for dealing with a compliment. Table 3.4 details Holmes's taxonomy.

Table 3. 4 Holmes's taxonomy of compliment responses (1986)

Main strategy	Secondary strategy
Accept	Appreciation or agreement token Agreeing utterance Downgrading or qualifying utterance Return compliment <i>Emoticon</i> <i>Upgrade compliment</i>
Reject	Disagreeing utterance

	Question accuracy Challenge sincerity
Deflect/Evade	Shift credit Informative comment Ignore Legitimate evasion Request reassurance/repetition

In addition to these baseline strategies, I found some additional ones, which I have added to Table 3.4, in italics. One of these, upgrade a compliment, is present in Herbert's (1986) taxonomy. Once I exported the data from the database to Excel for analysis, I added extra categories for coding the compliment and compliment response data: other supportive elements not already included in the list of compliment categories (see Table 3.2).

Under the umbrella of other supportive elements, I noted occurrences of things such as elongation of letters, repeated use of punctuation, writing in all capitals, use of diminutives and augmentatives, and the use of emoticons (see Chapter 4.5). I also noted the specific forms of address used in compliments and responses to gain the clearest picture of how Ecuadorian and Spanish men give and respond to compliments.

Although I had a taxonomy to hand, fitting naturally occurring, often very informal, compliments and responses neatly into one box proved difficult at times, and necessitated making sometimes arbitrary coding decisions, as illustrated in Example 3.9, and noted by Herbert (1986).

Example 3. 9 Compliment response coding

Photograph of SM22 and another male friend.

Male 1: *eramos los mas guapos de la tienda, que me fijé* ('we were the most handsome in the store that I saw')

SM22: *jajaj, sin duda alguna! Un specimen como tú y como yo no se encuentra facilmente! XD* ('Ha ha, without a doubt! One doesn't easily find a specimen like you')

In Example 3.9, a male friend is complimenting SM22 (and himself) on their appearance. SM22 first agrees with the compliment, then in the second sentence returns the compliment. This example demonstrates the difficulties encountered when deciding where to draw boundaries for classification purposes. The compliment is fairly clear: it's a positive remark about Male 1 and SM22's appearance. In this case, I have coded it simply as a compliment on appearance. The separate category relating to complimenting oneself is reserved only for participants themselves. That is, if a person who wasn't a participant in the study gave him or herself a compliment, I did not code it as a self-compliment.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined a variety of methodologies for studying compliments, and have also given an overview of the methodologies that have been used in compliment studies on social media to date. I described the various considerations and past research experiences that shaped the methodology for the current study. Due to what I see as a lack of clarity with respect to research methodology in existing studies on compliments in social media, I have given a very detailed account here of precisely how I gathered my data, and what I took into account when coding the data. As digital research progresses, I am confident that the manners in which data can be gathered and managed will become even more sophisticated. That said, I believe that the data gathering technique used

here is unique and fairly advanced, and that my data coding has been thorough and thoughtful.

In the next chapter, I discuss the results: compliments and responses in EcSp. This discussion is followed by a similar chapter about compliments and responses in PenSp. The results of each group will first be discussed individually, without constant reference to the other group. I will present a brief description of the results of the females in each group, solely for purposes of comparison, or to root the study in its larger context, rather than in a vacuum.

Chapter 4

RESULTS: ECUADOR

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 provided the theoretical framework for examining compliments and compliment responses and Chapter 3 set out the methodological framework, which is the foundation of the current study. In this chapter, I discuss the results of the Ecuadorian corpus. I present the topics of compliments and lexical elements observed in the Ecuadorian corpus (Sections 4.2 and 4.2.1). Syntactic patterns of compliments form the next topic for discussion (Section 4.3), followed by supportive elements that accompanied compliments (Section 4.5). After focusing on compliments, I examine compliment responses among young Ecuadorian men on FB, specifically, how the topic of compliment impacts the compliment response rate, the forms that compliment responses take, and supportive elements in compliment response (Sections 4.6 and 4.7).

Before undertaking a detailed discussion of topics of compliments in the current study, it is useful to first place the information within a larger context: the total number of photographs overall that received comments, the number of comments received, the number of photos that received compliments, and the number of compliments received. The total comments, the number of photos attracting compliments and the actual number of compliments is given both for males and females so that we can see, briefly, how Ecuadorian male behavior compares to Ecuadorian female behavior. The total comments figure includes every comment made with respect to photographs in this study, but excludes

compliments made by participants on their own photographs. The data is set out in Table 4.1.

Table 4. 1 Overview of Ecuadorian male vs. female compliments

Ecuadorian FB participants	Total photos w/comments	Total comments		Total photos w/comps		Total compliments	
		M	F	M	F	M	F
EM1	161	1311		39		65	
		1,032	279	25	18	41	24
EM2	108	221		33		46	
		172	49	21	16	25	21
EM3	QUIT						
EM4	25	57		5		5	
		31	26	0	5	0	5
EM5	NO PHOTOS						
EM6	NO PHOTOS						
EM7	223	1125		53		68	
		668	457	13	42	13	55
EM8	113	709		53		95	
		360	349	1	52	1	94
EM9	118	766		26		33	
		596	170	11	17	13	20
EM10	51	266		18		30	
		113	153	6	14	5	25
EM11	275	1201		83		137	
		737	464	23	69	26	111
EM12	8	36		3		4	
		31	5	3	1	3	1
EM13	81	526		22		57	
		392	134	7	18	8	49
EM14	87	225		31		48	
		116	109	7	30	7	41
EM15	112	517		50		75	
		371	146	23	36	22	53
EM16	121	356		23		35	
		193	163	12	15	12	23
EM17	141	553		72		114	
		271	282	18	62	24	90
EM18	306	1,567		124		237	
		1,085	482	58	90	65	172
EM19	24	84		8		12	
		65	19	6	3	9	3

EM20	130	585		55		82	
		328	257	12	51	11	71
EM21*	EXCLUDED						
EM22*	EXCLUDED						
EM23*	EXCLUDED						
EM24	73	484		31		54	
		264	220	3	29	3	51
EM25	1	2		0		0	
		1	1	0	0	0	0
EM26	452	3,244		254		630	
		1,798	1,446	117	171	176	454
EM27	27	41		8		13	
		13	28	3	7	2	11
EM28	60	336		12		29	
		252	84	4	10	3	26
EM29	22	61		15		24	
		24	37	5	12	6	18
EM30	101	483		40		69	
		272	211	8	34	6	63
EM31	34	131		25		38	
		111	20	21	9	28	10
EM32	85	282		22		34	
		216	66	13	13	15	19
TOTAL	2,939	15,169		1,105		2,034	
		9,512	5,657	420	824	524	1,510

*Participant excluded due to being from the wrong location or of the wrong age.

4.2 Topics of compliments

As discussed in Chapter 2, topics of compliments are fairly consistent across compliment studies in a variety of languages and settings. Topics of compliments that appear regularly are appearance, possessions, and ability. Manes (1983:98) found that, in face-to-face interactions in AmE, the most common topic of compliment was appearance. Herbert (1997) found that in Poland, possessions attracted the greatest number of compliments, while Lee's (2009) study of compliments in Chinese revealed that compliments focused on

the academic achievements and career prospects of children (p. 524). Various studies on SNSs of compliments in a variety of languages have found appearance to be the most frequent topic of compliments (see Placencia and Lower (2013); Maíz-Arévalo (2013); Eslami, Jabbari, and Kuo (2019); and Placencia (2019)).

Among Ecuadorian men on FB, I observed compliments on the topics of appearance (*q wapos* – ‘how handsome’), possessions (*ke buena camara* – ‘what a good camera’), ability (*excelente exitos compadre* – ‘excellent successes buddy’), personality (*gran artista gran fumador gran soñador gran bebedor grannnnn ser humano* – ‘great artist great smoker great dreamer great dreamer great human being’), friendship (*bien esos recuerdos con toa la gente* – ‘good memories with everybody’), children (*que nena tan tierna* – ‘what a baby so tender’), and pets (*q lindo* – ‘how pretty’).

Table 4.2 shows compliments received by each participant, by category. Ecuadorian men received few compliments on children and pets, sharply in contrast to the results for female AmE speakers (Placencia and Lower, 2013), demonstrating how it is not always helpful to follow parameters of past studies too rigidly.

Table 4. 2 Compliments among Ecuadorian men, by category

	Appearance	Possessions	Ability	Personality	Friendship	Child	Pets	Total
EM1	7	1	7	22	3	1	0	41
EM2	9	2	8	6	0	0	0	25
EM3	QUIT THE STUDY							
EM4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EM5	NO PHOTOS							
EM6	NO PHOTOS							
EM7	7	1	0	2	3	0	0	13

EM8	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
EM9	2	0	0	10	1	0	0	13
EM10	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	5
EM11	11	1	1	3	2	0	8	26
EM12	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
EM13	1	1	1	0	1	4	0	8
EM14	1	0	2	4	0	0	0	7
EM15	12	0	2	6	2	0	0	22
EM16	3	0	8	1	0	0	0	12
EM17	2	1	12	5	4	0	0	24
EM18	29	1	12	19	3	0	1	65
EM19	3	0	2	1	3	0	0	9
EM20	3	0	1	2	5	0	0	11
EM21	EXCLUDED							
EM22	EXCLUDED							
EM23	EXCLUDED							
EM24	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
EM25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EM26	40	5	124	6	1	0	0	176
EM27	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
EM28	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	3
EM29	4	0	1	0	1	0	0	6
EM30	0	1	3	2	0	0	0	6
EM31	4	0	1	4	19	0	0	28
EM32	5	1	1	1	5	2	0	15
TOTAL	150	16	187	99	54	9	9	524
	28.6%	3.1%	35.7%	18.9%	10.3%	1.7%	1.7%	
w/o EM26	110	11	63	93	53	9	9	348
w/o EM26	31.6%	3.2%	18.1%	26.7%	15.2%	2.6%	2.6%	

Table 4.2 shows that the most common topic of compliment received by Ecuadorian men was not appearance, but ability. This contrasts with Placencia and Lower (2013) in which only 7% of compliments given to women related to ability (p. 637). Placencia and Yépez Lasso (1999) found that the majority of compliments among EcSp speakers was appearance, but this finding included women.

There were examples of compliment on ability (achievement) in Placencia and Yépez Lasso's corpus, and the authors note that the context in which the data is gathered influences which compliments occur, which is the case with the

Ecuadorian corpus, largely due to one participant, EM26. EM26 worked as a tattoo artist in Quito and many of his FB photos were of tattoos that he has done, as well as his drawings. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 demonstrate that EM26 has the most photographs in this study, and that he received the highest number of comments and compliments out of all the Ecuadorian participants. He is an outlier, both in terms of his own engagement and the engagement of others with him on FB. For that reason, it can be useful to view the results with EM26 excluded, given in the last two rows of Table 4.2. With EM26 excluded, appearance becomes the most frequent topic of compliment, and compliments on ability fall to third place.

4.2.1. Lexical elements in topics of compliments

The lexical elements used most by Ecuadorian men to realize compliments were adjectives, which occurred in 74.4% of compliments, a result that coincides with findings by Placencia and Yépez Lasso, in which 61.4% of compliments included an adjective (1999:97), as well as findings by Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez, who found that 59.8% of compliments by Quiteños deployed adjectives to express positive sentiments (2013:119).

Some adjectives were used repeatedly, while others only occurred once. Table 4.3 shows all adjectives used twice or more with respect to the category of compliment with which they appear. Some entries, such as *bueno*, ('good') include variations on the word (such as *buenisimo* or *buenazo*), as well as alternative spellings, whether deliberately or in error.

Table 4. 3 Adjectives and adjectival phrases used in Ecuadorian compliments

Adjective/ adjectival phrase	Appearance	Possessions	Ability	Personality	Friendship	Kids	Pets	Total
<i>Bacán</i> ('cool')	13	2	10	5	3	-	3	36 (11.5%)
<i>Belleza</i> ('beauty')	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 (.6%)
<i>Bestia</i> (lit., 'beast'; fig., 'amazing')	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	2 (.6%)
<i>Bonito</i> ('pretty')	5	-	2	-	-	1	-	8 (2.5%)
<i>Bueno</i> ('good')	27	3	30	22	3	2	-	87 (27.7%)
<i>Chévere</i> ('cool')	13	2	6	6	5	-	2	34 (10.8%)
<i>Del putas</i> ('amazing')	4	-	16	1	2	-	-	23 (7.3%)
<i>Elegante</i> ('elegant')	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	6 (1.9%)
<i>Excelente</i> ('excellent')	3	1	9	2	2	-	-	17 (5.4%)
<i>Fresco</i> ('fresh')	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	3 (.9%)
<i>Genial</i> ('good')	1	-	9	-	-	-	-	10 (3.2%)
<i>Good</i> ('good')	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	2 (.6%)
<i>Grande</i> ('grand')	1	-	1	3	-	-	-	5 (1.6%)
<i>Guapo</i> ('handsome')	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	6 (1.9%)
<i>Hermoso</i> ('pretty')	4	1	2	-	-	1	1	9 (2.9%)
<i>Increíble</i> ('incredible')	1	-	2	1	-	-	-	4 (1.3%)
<i>Lindo</i> ('pretty')	8	1	2	-	2	2	1	16 (5.1%)
<i>Loco</i> ('crazy')	-	-	1	7	-	-	-	8 (2.5%)
<i>Lujo</i> ('luxury')	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2 (.6%)
<i>Maestro</i> ('master')	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2 (.6%)
<i>Rico</i> ('delicious')	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	4 (1.3%)
<i>Sexy</i> ('sexy')	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 (.6%)
<i>Súper</i> ('super')	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2 (.6%)
Others	5	2	9	5	1	2	-	24 (7.6%)
	102	15	106	55	21	8	7	314

Table 4.3 demonstrates a preference for a fairly generic adjective: *bueno*, though *bacán* and *chévere* were also used frequently, a result that differs from Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez's study in which the most common adjectives were *lindo*, *guapo*, and *rico*. (2013:119). This is most likely a result of the difference in methodologies used in the studies. Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez deployed dialogue construction questionnaires which provided four situations, two focusing on physical appearance, one involving a new possession,

and the final scenario relating to ability (p. 107). To give an example, the final scenario elicits compliments on culinary abilities; therefore, it is not surprising that the adjective *rico* predominates in the corpus Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez examined. The current study relies exclusively on naturally occurring data, which means that the interactions are not restricted to specific scenarios (see Chapters 2.3.2 and 3.3).

Some of the adjectives and adjectival phrases that occur in Ecuadorian male compliments are not the sort that one typically associates with a compliment, such as *del putas*, or *sádico* ('sadistic' – included under 'Others' in Table 4.3, as it occurs once). These in-group adjectives are those that people outside of a given social circle may not understand in certain contexts. Wolfson (1983: 87, citing Shelton, 1982) points out that within in-group interactions, different adjectives occur apart from the more traditional ones of 'nice,' 'good,' or 'beautiful' (p. 87). Shelton (1982) observed this phenomenon among African Americans, and Placencia and Yépez Lasso (1999:100) noted the use of in-group adjectives and adjectival phrases among Ecuadorians, notably *del putas*, as in the current study, shown in Table 4.3.

Using superficially impolite words and phrases is also known as mock impoliteness (*anticortesía*). Mugford and Montes (2020:106) describe mock impoliteness as a mechanism to relieve the conflict that speakers experience when desiring to express their feelings but not wanting to appear overly emotional. On the other hand, it can be said that employing constructions like *del putas* constitutes a way of intensifying the compliment. The concept of mock impoliteness is particularly useful in explaining some of the comments and

attitudes expressed by Ecuadorian men throughout the corpus (see below, Section 4.2.2).

Table 4.3 shows the popularity of various adjectives across categories: *bacán*, *bueno*, *chévere*, and *lindo* occur in six out of seven categories of compliments, while *excelente* and *hermoso* occur in five out of seven categories. The application of a few adjectives to a variety of topics and photos demonstrates a degree of formulaicity among Ecuadorian men in terms of adjective use in compliments.

In the following sections, I discuss each topic of compliment individually, beginning with appearance. I discuss topics in the order that they are coded in the database, which allows for consistency in presentation of results between the two groups of participants. Discussion of compliment topics includes a more focused analysis on adjectives used in the realization of compliments.

4.2.2 Appearance

Appearance was the second most frequent topic of compliments, and if EM26 is excluded from analysis (see Table 4.2), it becomes the most common topic of compliment. The most frequently used adjective in compliments on appearance was *bueno* ('good'), followed by *bacán* ('cool') and *chévere* ('cool') (see Table 4.3). Ecuadorian men also used the adverb *bien* ('good') frequently, noted also by Placencia and Yépez Lasso (1999:99). Many compliments consist of *bien* alone or repeated, or with a form of address or a noun. Example 4.1 illustrates this.

Example 4. 1 Use of *bien* in compliments on appearance

(a) *bn bn la foto* ('good good the photo')

(b) *bien ese man* ('good this man')

Bien and *bueno* are loosely synonymous in meaning (though cannot be used interchangeably) and convey a fairly bland positive message. The in-group adjectives of *bacán* and *chévere* were the next most frequently used in compliments on appearance, and as was the case with *bien* and *bueno*, have approximately similar meanings. There were some instances in which Ecuadorian men used stronger adjectives relating to male appearance, but this was infrequent (see Table 4.3). More examples of compliments on Ecuadorian male appearance are given in Example 4.2.

Example 4. 2 Ecuadorian male compliments on appearance

(a) *q wapos* ('how handsome')

(b) *Que elegancia!!!!* ('What elegance!!!!')

The fact that Ecuadorian men complimented each other frequently on appearance, and used fairly generic adjectives to do so, demonstrates a tendency towards formulaic complimenting behavior, both in terms of what is being complimented, and the words used. The tendency towards generic, formulaic compliments on appearance also gives a glimpse of a recurring theme throughout the Ecuadorian results: overt displays of traditional masculinity. This idea surfaces in various ways: in photos of scantily clad women, calling each other homosexuals, and by referring to each other with female pronouns and the feminine forms of adjectives, among others. Example 4.3 provides some examples of this in compliments on appearance. The use of feminine adjectives is notable because the photos receiving compliments only feature men.

Example 4. 3 Displays of masculinity in appearance compliments

- (a) *que guapas jajajaj* ('how beautiful hahahah')
- (b) *que hermosa que eres* ('how beautiful you are')

These displays of masculinity, particularly in compliments directed at other men on appearance, suggest that Ecuadorian men are constrained by what they perceive as their correct gender roles, which impacts how they express praise for other men on FB. Ecuadorian men seem able to compliment another man's appearance, but the compliment cannot be too intimate or detailed, otherwise they risk being perceived as a homosexual, a regular topic of ribbing among Ecuadorian men that does not surface in the same way among Spanish men (see Chapter 5).

4.2.3 Possessions

Ecuadorian men gave each other relatively few compliments on possessions: only 16 or 3.1% of total compliments. Table 4.4 lists items receiving compliments from Ecuadorian men.

Table 4. 4 Possession compliments among Ecuadorian men

Item	Compliment
Headphones	<i>bien bien esos beats</i> ('good good those beats')
Shoes	<i>stan chevresss</i> ('those are cool')
Soccer goalie gloves	<i>bacanos stan</i> ('those are cool')
Camera	<i>Esta cámara es una bestia</i> ('This camera is a beast')
Boots	<i>vacanes las botas</i> ('the boots are cool')
Video games	<i>que chevere</i> ('how cool')
Tour bus	<i>q hermoso</i> ('how pretty')
Bicycle	<i>exelente</i> ('excellent')
Bass guitar	<i>que de pinga ese bajo</i> ('how cool is this bass')

The results of compliments on possessions was surprising given the findings of Placencia and Yépez Lasso (1999), who noted that possessions on compliments often included questions about where an item was purchased, and

seemed to place value on items imported (p. 96). This was not present at all in the Ecuadorian corpus, presumably as goods are more easily accessible now than in the past. Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez noted substantially more compliments on possessions, but this is certainly due to the methodology, which asked study participants to give a compliment on a friend's new mobile telephone (2013:107).

Whether the results of compliments on possessions are due to the medium (FB), or some other factor, is unknown. There were photographs that could elicit compliments on possessions, but did not receive any. This may signify that Ecuadorian men do not value each other's possessions enough to compliment them, or it may simply be that men prefer to compliment other aspects. Posting photos of possessions on FB could be done in order to highlight new items, or perhaps to show off their good taste. The lack of compliments on these photographs may represent a pragmatic failure at some level, or a mismatch in expectations on the value of newness (see Manes, 1983). A possession that unexpectedly received a compliment is given in Example 4.4.

Example 4. 4 Ecuadorian male compliment on possession

EM32's photograph from the album, *solo panas* ('only friends'), of a drawing of a marijuana leaf, with the words, "Denis the Menace" in elaborate writing in a notebook, and the word *aldea* ('village') on the side. The notebook has a handgun lying to one side of it, and a clip on each side of the notebook.

Male 1: *pepa esa rebolber* ('cool revolver')

EM32: *pilas la Aldea dice jejejeje* (literally, 'batteries', figuratively, 'get ready village it says ha ha')

The compliment in Example 4.4 demonstrates that within EM32's social circle a handgun is something of value.

4.2.4 Ability

Ecuadorian men received more compliments from other men on ability than any other topic (see Table 4.2), mainly because of EM26. With EM26 included, 36% of the compliments in this study pertained to ability. If EM26 is excluded, ability becomes the third most common topic of compliment, with 18.3% of compliments overall. This is a large difference and suggests that ability is not valued as highly overall as appearance and friendship in this group of Ecuadorian men. The results from Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez's study scenario on ability yielded results that fall somewhere in between the two sets of results in the current study: they found that Quiteños give compliments on ability 27.7% of the time (2013:110).

Whether EM26 is included or excluded from analysis, the majority of compliments on ability were realized by use of an adjective, the most common being *bueno* ('good'). Similarly to compliments on appearance, *bacán* ('cool') and *chévere* ('cool') featured heavily. A mock impolite adjectival phrase used frequently in compliments on ability, and typically directed at EM26, is *del putas* (literally, 'of the whores'). Table 4.5 shows a comparison of adjective use in compliments on ability, both with EM26 included and excluded.

Table 4. 5 Adjectives and adjectival phrases in compliments on ability

	With EM26	Without EM26
<i>Alto</i> ('high')	1	1
<i>Bacán</i> ('cool')	10	4
<i>Bomba</i> ('bomb')	1	-
<i>Bonito</i> ('pretty')	2	1

<i>Bueno</i> ('good')	30	12
<i>Chévere</i> ('cool')	6	5
<i>Classy</i> ('classy')	1	-
<i>Del putas</i> ('amazing')	16	5
<i>Excelente</i> ('excellent')	9	2
<i>Extremo</i> ('extreme')	1	-
<i>Fabuloso</i> ('fabulous')	1	-
<i>Genial</i> ('good')	9	2
<i>Good</i> ('good')	1	-
<i>Grande</i> ('grand')	1	1
<i>Hermoso</i> ('pretty')	2	1
<i>Increíble</i> ('incredible')	2	1
<i>Lindo</i> ('pretty')	2	-
<i>Loco</i> ('crazy')	1	1
<i>Lujo</i> ('luxury')	2	2
<i>Magnífico</i> ('magnificent')	1	-
<i>Ñami</i> ('yummy')	1	-
<i>Padre</i> ('great')	1	1
<i>Rico</i> ('delicious')	2	-
<i>Sádico</i> ('sadistic')	1	-
<i>Súper</i> ('super')	1	-
No adjective	59	17

Table 4.5 shows that a greater variety of adjectives were used in compliments on ability given to EM26. Ecuadorian men relied on adjectives slightly more often in ability compliments when EM26 is excluded, though not to a significant degree, approximately .5% more. As there was more opportunity to compliment on ability when EM26 is included, it is not surprising that there is greater scope for a wider range of compliment strategies and adjectives. However, if this were the sole reason, compliment studies with large corpora should all demonstrate a diverse use of compliment strategies, which is not the case (see Chapter 2).

Excluding EM26 from analysis changes the popularity ranking of adjectives slightly, but not significantly, demonstrating that Ecuadorian male complimenting behavior stays relatively consistent whether EM26 is included or

not. This result supports retaining outliers, as it shows that outliers do not necessarily change the overall results.

Ecuadorian participants received compliments on photography skills, DJing skills, and musicianship, with the majority of compliments on ability directed at participants (apart from EM26) focused on photography skills (see also Placencia and Lower, 2013). Compliments on photography skills are open to interpretation because it is often ambiguous precisely what is being complimented. An example of this is Example 4.5.

Example 4. 5 Compliment on photography skills

EM1's photo of a man and woman smartly dressed

- (01) Male 1: *uhhhhhhhhhh y asiiiiiiiiiiii no ganamos q fraude*
(‘uh and like this we didn’t win, what a fraud’)
- (02) Male 1: *Me Gusta* (‘I like it’)
- (03) Male 1: *y me gusta fuuuuuuuuuuullllllllllllllllllllll* (‘I really like it’)
- (04) Male 1: *BUena foto* (‘Good photo’)
- (05) Male 1: *y me sigue gustando* (‘I keep liking it’)
- (06) Male 2: *buena la foto master* (‘good photo, master’)
- (07) EM1: *Ya sabes uno Fotografo* (‘Any time I’m a photographer’)

In Example 4.5, Male 1, who gave five compliments on the photo (lines 01-05), seems to be the man in the photograph and it appears that he and the woman in the photo were participating in a dance contest as a couple and did not win, to which he objects. Male 1 takes several turns to express his appreciation of the photo (lines 01-05). EM1 responds, acknowledging that he took the photo,

after a more obvious compliment on his photography skills by Male 2 (line 06). It is arguable that Male 1 intended to compliment himself and his companion. However, taking the entire scenario into account, I have counted Male 1's compliments in lines 02-05 as relating to EM1's photography skills. Male 1's first comment seems to relate to his and his companion's appearance so it was not included in the analysis of compliments (see Chapter 3).

4.2.5 Personality

Compliments on personality featured prominently among Ecuadorian men, being the third most frequent topic with EM26 included and the second most common topic with EM26 excluded (see Table 4.2). Personality seems as though it would be a difficult subject to compliment via photographs on social media, but this group has shown otherwise. As with other topics of compliments, the majority (70.1%) of compliments on personality given to Ecuadorian men were realized by use of an adjective, most commonly *bueno* ('good').

Compliments on personality also used the adjective *bien* ('good') frequently. One new adjective appears here: *loco* ('crazy'). We saw the use of *loco* as a positive adjective in Table 4.5 in relation to EM26's ability, but it is also used as a form of address, in which context it means 'buddy'. Example 4.6 demonstrates the use of *loco* as an adjective in personality compliments.

Example 4. 6 Use of *loco* in personality compliments

(a) EM15 in his military uniform, squatting in the grass

Male 1: *Bien loco ese* ('you are really crazy')⁷

⁷ This is another example of ambiguity caused by lack of punctuation and correct spelling. It is not entirely clear whether *loco* here is a form of address, or whether it means 'crazy'. Similarly, *ése* could mean 'that' or 'that one', but it could also be a shortened form of *ese man* – 'that guy'. For

EM15: *Ya sabes m brow* ('Any time my bro')

- (b) EM15 in his military uniform, with his squadron

Male 1: *bien loco esa foto avisaras pa las bielas* ('that photo is very crazy let me know sometime about grabbing a beer')

EM15: *de unas* [Male 1] *pilas.. pa las bielaaa* ('of course [Male 1], get ready for some beers')

The majority of compliments on personality that convey a positive message via adjective rely more on unambiguously positive adjectives. Compliments on personality that do not rely on an adjective are opaquer, using open-ended elliptical phrases (see Section 4.3) along with laughter to convey a positive message. Such compliments take a few set forms, as in Example 4.7.

Example 4. 7 Non-adjectival compliments on personality

- (a) Photo of EM18 making a funny face

Male 1: *q rrisa* ('how funny')

- (b) Photo of EM15 in his military uniform, in an office

Male 1: *ese man* ('that guy')

The two forms of non-adjectival compliments here were typically of one of the forms in Example 4.7, expressing amusement at the photo (a) or use of a noun phrase relating to the participant (b) which leaves the compliments open to interpretation. A compliment in the form of (b) could also be a compliment on appearance, and I have coded some compliments of the same form as compliments on appearance, as well as ability. As ever, context is key and coding choices are made based on the overall context of the photo, the compliment, any responses, and other comments.

this example, I view *bien* as an intensifier, similar to *muy* ('very'), *loco* as 'crazy', and *ese* as 'that'.

Other popular expressions used to compliment personality include *que goce* ('what pleasure') and *que cague* (literally: 'what shit'). The use of *que cague* is another example of the use of mock impoliteness among young Ecuadorian males (see Mugford and Montes, 2020). *Que cague* may also be an abbreviation of *que cague de risas* ('that is pretty funny'), which ties it back to Example 4.7 ("*qrrisa*"). This demonstrates a bit of variation, but generally Ecuadorian men stuck to a few set forms to express a positive message about another man's personality.

4.2.6 Friendship

Friendship is an interesting topic of compliment among Ecuadorian men, despite the fact that it was only the fourth most common topic of compliment. Only half of the compliments on friendship use an adjective to convey a positive message, and it is the first topic of compliment to unseat *bueno* ('good') from its position as one of the top two adjectives used in compliments. Friendship compliments were the only ones to use the adjectives of *inolvidables* ('unforgettable') and *maestra* ('master'). The use of *maestra* is particularly interesting, as it was used in relation to a photo, rather than a person's ability, as in Example 4.8.

Example 4. 8 Use of *maestra* in a compliment relating to friendship

- (a) EM31's photo of a large group of people, male and female, from the photo album entitled *viejos tiempos de los "MIEMBROS"* ('old times of the "MEMBERS"')

Male 1: *que maestra esa foto les felicito* ('what a masterful photo I congratulate you [all]')

- (b) EM31's photo of group of young men, from the photo album entitled *viejos tiempos de los "MIEMBROS"* ('old times of the "MEMBERS"')

EM20: *que maestra la foto! ya lloro!!* ('what a masterful photo! now I cry!!')

The compliments in Example 4.8 are different than that in Example 4.5 (Section 4.2.3) because the participant receiving the compliment in Example 4.5 did not feature in the photo, while the compliment recipient (EM31) featured in the photographs in Example 4.8. The other indication that the compliments in Example 4.8 pertain to friendship comes from the name of the photo album (see above) and its content, comprised of photos of one group of school classmates, which appear to be a close friendship group. There is not much difference between the photos in Example 4.5 and Example 4.8 in terms of quality; both show the subjects of the respective photos in clear focus. Generally, I did not take photo quality into account when analyzing compliments, as quality is too subjective.

Example 4.9 gives another example of a compliment on friendship, this time relying on the adjectival phrase, *del putas* ('amazing'), again demonstrating the use of mock impoliteness (see Mugford and Montes, 2020).

Example 4. 9 Compliment on friendship

EM1's photo of a group of four young men with arms around each other.

EM7: *hasta ahora seguimos siendo panas del putas.....!!!!!!* ('until now we continue to be bloody amazing buddies')

There are many other photos from this group of men that had several comments, displaying a high level of interaction on FB. These comments were

not exactly compliments, but displayed friendship and intimacy, lending credibility to the idea that friendship is very important to Ecuadorian men. Taken in conjunction with the reasonable quantity of compliments on friendship as well as a tendency to express compliments on friendship implicitly (see Section 4.4), friendly, non-complimentary exchanges between Ecuadorian men demonstrate the use of social media as a vehicle for maintaining and reinforcing the bonds of friendship. It also demonstrates feelings of nostalgia among this group: reminiscing about school days and social events they attended together in the past.

Compliments on friendship discussed here have been classified as explicit (see Section 4.3) primarily because they fall within an existing, recognized syntactic patterns of compliments (see Chapter 2). Content-wise, one could argue that these compliments are nevertheless ambiguous, or require a higher level of background knowledge and interpretation.

4.2.7 Children and pets

There were few examples of compliments on children or pets in the Ecuadorian corpus, though this gives a slightly inaccurate picture of the Ecuadorian participants, who featured numerous photos of children on their FB profiles. All of the children in the photos appeared to be the children of participants, the clues being in the photo captions: *mi nena* ('my little girl'), for example. Photographs of children particularly received many compliments from women, but comparatively few from men. There was not an absence of positive messages from men however; the messages typically took the form of

felicitaciones ('congratulations') or *bendiciones* ('blessings'), rather than a compliment.

With respect to adjectives used by men to compliment children, *bueno* ('good'), *hermoso* ('pretty'), and *lindo* ('pretty') featured most prominently. Other adjectives used include *bonito* ('pretty'), and *tierna* ('tender'). This is not particularly illuminating, as there are only nine examples of compliments on children in the entire Ecuadorian corpus. What is interesting is that a relatively large variety of adjectives were used for a small number of compliments.

The majority of compliments on pets were given to one participant: EM11, and only one other given to EM18's dog. Most compliments directed at pets used an adjective to convey a positive message, with *bacán* and *chévere* ('cool') featuring three and two times, respectively. One interesting form of compliment that appeared with respect to pets that also surfaced regarding personality (see 4.2.5) was *ese animal* ('that animal') or *ese [pet's name]* (that [pet's name]').

It is difficult to judge from this small sample whether pets are unimportant to Ecuadorian men. In EM11's album of his dog, there are 49 total photos of his dog on its own. Only half of those photos (24) attracted a comment. The majority of the comments on EM11's dog photos were just that: comments and not compliments.

Now I transition from discussing the topical content of compliments among Ecuadorian men and focus on the syntactic forms that compliments take. Topics of compliments still feature the discussion with respect to preferences for certain syntactic forms in relation to particular topics.

4.3 Syntactic patterns of direct compliments

As with topics of compliments, discussion of syntactic patterns begins with a broad overview of the results. Recall from Chapter 3 the various syntactic patterns applied here, reproduced below in Table 4.6, which also gives an overview of how often each syntactic pattern occurred. I first discuss the frequency with which each compliment syntactic pattern occurs. Next, I discuss difficulties that arise in determining syntactic patterns used in naturally occurring data. Finally, I examine syntactic pattern usage vis-à-vis topics of compliments.

4.3.1 Overview of syntactic pattern use in compliments

Table 4.6 gives the frequency of each syntactic pattern of compliment that appeared in the Ecuadorian corpus.

Table 4. 6 Frequency of syntactic patterns of compliments

Syntactic pattern	Code	Occurences	Without EM26
(NP) + V(+Intens) + ADJ/ADV	A	2 (.4%)	2 (.6%)
V (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV (+NP)	B	46 (8.8%)	31 (8.9%)
V (+NP) (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV	C	0	0
(Interj) + (qué) + ADJ/ADV (+Poss + NP)	D	2 (.4%)	1 (.3%)
(Interj) + (qué) + ADJ/ADV (+que + V)	E	3 (.6%)	2 (.6%)
Qué (+ADJ) + NP (+que + V)	F	62 (11.8%)	50 (14.4%)
(Intens) + ADJ/ADV	G	131 (25%)	69 (19.8%)
Cómo + V	H	0	0
NP + gustar/fascinar/encantar	I	6 (1.1%)	4 (1.1%)
Implicit compliment	J	57 (10.9%)	37 (10.6%)
NP	L	42 (8%)	28 (8%)
Qué + NP + tan/más + ADJ	O	1 (.2%)	1 (.3%)
NP + ADJ/ADV	P	13 (2.5%)	10 (2.9%)
Other	Q	29 (5.5%)	20 (5.7%)
Qué + ADJ/ADV	R	41 (7.8%)	26 (7.5%)
ADJ/ADV + NP	S	83 (15.8%)	62 (17.8%)
Tan...como	T	0	0
ADJ/ADV + V (+NP)	U	6 (1.1%)	5 (1.4%)

V + NP	V	-	-
Total		524	348

Instances of ‘no compliment’ (pattern K), compliments in other languages (category M), and compliment responses (pattern N) are excluded from Table 4.6. Compliment responses are discussed in Section 4.6. ‘Other’ compliments (pattern Q), are patterns that occurred only once, not warranting a separate category.

As discussed in Chapter 3, I relied on Placencia and Yépez Lasso’s (1999) syntactic patterns from their study in EcSp, as it was very clear in describing syntactic patterns, and because their corpus consisted of naturally occurring data. In their study, Placencia and Yépez Lasso (1999) counted what are categories A-C in Table 4.6 as one category of patterns, whereas I treated them as three separate categories. I repeatedly encountered a variation of this pattern, which was ADJ + V, which is essentially the same as patterns A-C, but without a NP or intensifier, and with the word order switched around. At first, I placed compliments of this form under pattern B, but ultimately created a new category for this form (category U) because it occurred regularly, and while it essentially means the same thing as patterns A-C, it appears to be a new form that was not observed by Placencia and Yépez Lasso (1999).

There is a clearly preferred syntactic pattern that emerges: pattern G. This is not surprising, as it is the simplest method for giving a compliment. The preference for a pattern that requires minimum effort gives the Ecuadorian men a slightly negative image of only being willing to put in the least effort possible. It is too simplistic to come to this conclusion, however, and demonstrates why

compliments should be viewed holistically, and, where possible, within their original context.

It is true that the majority of compliments in the current study deploy pattern G, but this does not account for the large variety of supportive elements that typically accompany compliments of this form; there are only a handful of compliments of this pattern that are not accompanied by a question, further unrelated commentary, or some sort of supportive element, and even those compliments do not use generic adjectives, such as *bueno* ('good'). An example of a stand-alone compliment of using pattern G is shown in Example 4.10.

Example 4. 10 Compliment using syntactic pattern G

EM26's photo of a tattoo he made on a man's forearm, captioned "*alto gato oriental machuka*" ('eastern high cat crushed') from the album entitled "tattoo life".

Male 1: *magnifico* ('magnificent') (comment 'liked' by EM26)

Table 4.6 also shows syntactic pattern usage without EM26. When EM26 is excluded, category G remains the most common syntactic pattern used by Ecuadorian men, but is followed very closely by category S, which was a distant second when EM26 was included in the analysis. Apart from this gap, syntactic patterns did not vary much whether EM26 was included or not, which suggests that the decision as to which syntactic pattern to use when complimenting is fairly uniform, regardless of topic of compliment.

Several of the syntactic patterns in Table 4.6 are essentially identical. Table 4.7 combines some syntactic patterns to give a different view on how the patterns are deployed in the Ecuadorian corpus. Apart from the groupings in

Placencia and Yépez Lasso (1999), I have combined some others, discussed below.

Table 4. 7 Syntactic patterns, rearranged

Syntactic pattern	Occurences	Without EM26	Placencia and Yépez Lasso(1999)
(Intens) + ADJ/ADV (Interj) + (qué) + ADJ/ADV (+Poss + NP) (Interj) + (qué) + ADJ/ADV (+que + V)	137 (26.1%)	73(21%)	22.08%
NP + ADJ/ADV ADJ/ADV + NP	96 (18.3%)	72 (20.7%)	
Qué (+ADJ) + NP (+que + V)	62 (11.8%)	50 (14.4%)	10.42%
Implicit compliment	57 (10.9%)	37 (10.7%)	
(NP) + V (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV V (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV (+NP) V (+NP) (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV ADJ/ADV + V (+NP)	54 (10.3%)	37 (10.7%)	34.96%
NP	42 (8%)	28 (8%)	
Qué + ADJ/ADV	41 (7.8%)	26 (7.5%)	
Other	29 (5.5%)	20 (5.7%)	
NP + gustar/fascinar/encantar	6 (1.1%)	4 (1.1%)	1.22%
Qué + NP + tan/más + ADJ	1 (.2%)	1 (.3%)	
Cómo + V	0	0	1.84%
Tan...como	0	0	
V + NP	0	0	

In order to combine syntactic patterns, I stripped the patterns to their essential elements. In Table 4.7 I combined categories P and S because they have identical elements, only in different orders, as in the following two compliments (not actual compliments from the corpus):

Gato precioso ('Gorgeous cat)

Precioso el gato ('Gorgeous the cat')

Within Placencia and Yépez Lasso's (1999) categories of (Interj) + (qué) + ADJ (+Poss + NP) and (Interj) + (qué) + ADJ (+que + V), the elements in parentheses appear to be optional, which makes the adjective the only essential

piece in this syntactic form. I have added the possibility of using an adverb to this category (see Chapter 3.5.3). The authors do not discuss this possibility in their paper, which may be because their corpus did not contain any compliments consisting of an adjective on its own. If it is the case that the only necessary element for this syntactic pattern is the presence of an adjective, it makes sense to combine this form with pattern G, which increases the number of syntactic patterns containing at least an adjective.

When the syntactic patterns are arranged as above in Table 4.7, the results more closely resemble those of Placencia and Yépez Lasso (1999), with one difference: Placencia and Yépez Lasso's most frequently occurring category (V + ADJ/ADV, patterns A-C), does not rank as highly here. The most obvious explanation for this is the medium of the current study: FB. Placencia and Yépez Lasso (1999) used naturally occurring, face-to-face data produced in 1996 and 1997 in Quito (p. 87-88), while data for the current study come from FB, which is amenable to fast interactions, whether by one-word comments or through use of the 'like' function. It is also likely that the manner in which people speak to each other in Quito has changed between 1997 and 2010. Another factor is that the specific results for male compliments in Placencia and Yépez Lasso (1999) are unknown, as they do not discuss male-male results separately. I believe that the difference in use of syntactic patterns between the current study and Placencia and Yépez Lasso's (1999) study is best explained by a combination of all of these factors.

Overall, the results of the current study show a preference for giving a compliment that relies on an adjective or the adverb *bien* ('good') to convey a positive message. This is unsurprising, especially when considered in

conjunction with Placencia and Lower's (2013) study of compliments on FB in AmE (see 2.3.3). The current study deviates slightly from Placencia and Lower (2013) in that Placencia and Lower considered the pattern of (intens) + ADJ as a sub-category of NP + V (+intens) + ADJ, whereas here, I consider (intens) + ADJ as a sub-category of (Interj) + (qué) + ADJ (+Poss + NP) and (Interj) + (qué) + ADJ (+que + V), because the required element is the adjective (or adverb) and nothing else.

It is arguable that the elliptical form of (intens) + ADJ/ADV could comprise a sub-category of practically any other syntactic pattern that requires an adjective, as it's just one word, and seems to fit in many places, as illustrated in Example 4.11.

Example 4. 11 Placement of elliptical forms of compliment

- (a) NP + V + (intens) + ADJ/ADV → *Esta nena es muy linda* → *linda*
 NP + V + (intens) + ADJ/ADV → ('this girl is very pretty') →
 ('pretty')
- (b) (Interj) + (qué) + ADJ/ADV (+que + V) → *Ay qué linda que está* →
linda
 (Interj) + (qué) + ADJ/ADV (+que + V) → ('Oh how pretty is she')
 → ('pretty')

Regardless of how the syntactic patterns are arranged, it is clear that Ecuadorian men's most preferred method of complimenting is via adjectives or the adverb *bien*. This held true whether EM26 was included or excluded, which suggests that topics of compliments have little effect on which syntactic patterns are chosen.

4.3.2 Challenges in coding syntactic patterns of compliments

Some difficult decisions were necessary with respect to coding, as comments on FB often consist of several utterances, or sometimes paragraphs, and are often poorly punctuated and capitalized, if at all, making it difficult to determine the structure of a compliment. I counted each comment as one turn, regardless of how many utterances it contained. Compliments often cover multiple topics and use several syntactical patterns. In such instances, I determined the principal message of the compliment, and focused analysis on that. The following examples demonstrate difficulties involved in coding data extracted from FB.

Example 4. 12 Coding challenge

EM29's blurry photo of a person jumping, with a city in twilight in the background.

Male 1: *q dl puktas foto bro!! super espacial jaja* ('what a cool photo bro!! super spacial haha')

In Example 4.12 it is not clear whether the person in the photo is EM29, or somebody else. There are no other clues: the photo is in an untitled album and is not accompanied by a caption. Based on the wording of the compliment, it seems to refer to the actual photo, as in the composition and skill involved in taking it. I coded this compliment as one on ability, specifically EM29's photography skills. This compliment consists of two utterances, both seemingly relating to the skill involved in taking the photo, rather than a person's appearance. While either utterance could stand on its own as a compliment, I decided that "*q dl puktas foto bro!!*" contains the clearest and strongest positive message.

Paring down and focusing on one portion of a comment, while necessary, ultimately leads to difficult questions with respect to coding, questions to which I have not found the answers in past studies of naturally occurring data. When a comment consists of many utterances (whether punctuated and capitalized appropriately or not), choosing one to focus on necessarily excludes the others. Focusing on one part of a compliment can also cause other features of the comment to be lost. Is it correct to exclude from coding the use of multiple exclamation marks or a smiley emoticon, for example, because they were connected to a portion of the comment that was not deemed to carry the weight of the positive, complimentary message? Example 4.13 illustrates this.

Example 4. 13 Coding challenge

EM26's photo of a woman with body paint on her torso

Male 1: *este man siempre sorprende .ja aj .. bien brother!!!! esta del fructaas.!* ('this man always surprises. ha ha .. good brother!!!! it's amazing!)

The first utterance in Example 4.13, "*este man siempre sorprende,*" is an example of an implicit compliment (discussed fully in Section 4.4). 'This man always surprises' is an indirect way of saying that EM26 is creative. The next phrase, "*bien brother,*" is clear in that it uses a semantically positive word (*bien*) and addresses EM26 with the affectionate term, brother. The last phrase, "*esta del fructaas!*" is clear in its message that the body painting done by EM26 displayed in the photograph was really good. "*Del fructaas*" is an altered spelling of *de putas*, and also uses vowel elongation to add intensity to the message. For this compliment, I focused on the middle phrase, "*bien brother!!!!,*" because it most clearly conveys the overall weight of the message, that Male 1 thinks that

EM26's artwork displayed in the photograph is good. As with all choices, this one is not without consequences: focusing on this phrase leaves out the first phrase, which is a more creative and implicit way of complimenting EM26. However, the supportive elements included with the other utterances, such as the written depiction of laughter and vowel elongation are accounted for as supportive element, as I explain in Section 4.5. I account for all uses of supportive elements regardless of where they occurred in a compliment, because their presence adds to the overall positive message and gives a wider view of how Ecuadorian men compliment each other.

4.3.3 Syntactic patterns and compliment topics

In this section, I examine the relationship between syntactic patterns and compliment topics to see whether the topic has little bearing on the syntactic pattern deployed to realize a compliment.

Table 4.8 illustrates the use of syntactic patterns vis-à-vis categories of compliments, both with EM26 included and excluded. Presenting the results without EM26 is useful, as EM26 received a disproportionate number of compliments on ability compared to the other participants. Implicit compliments (pattern J) are included in Table 4.8, because while not following a set pattern, they are a category of syntactic pattern in their own right and it is useful to see how the usage of implicit compliments compares to other syntactic patterns.

Table 4. 8 Syntactic patterns and topics of compliments, with and without EM26

Syntactic pattern	Appearance	Appearance (no EM26)	Possessions	Possessions (no EM26)	Ability	Ability (no EM26)	Personality	Personality (no EM26)	Friendship	Friendship (no EM26)	Children	Children (no EM26)	Pets	Pets (no EM26)
A	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
B	12	12	1	1	17	5	8	5	5	5	2	2	-	-
C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
D	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
E	2	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
F	14	11	3	1	15	8	19	19	9	9	-	-	2	2
G	42	24	2	1	56	14	26	26	1	1	2	2	2	2
H	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
I	-	-	-	-	5	4	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
J	10	8	-	-	22	4	5	5	19	19	1	1	-	-
L	9	7	-	-	15	4	8	7	8	8	-	-	2	2
O	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-
P	6	5	-	-	1	-	4	3	2	2	-	-	-	-
Q	4	3	-	-	14	6	8	8	3	3	-	-	-	-
R	13	7	3	2	14	6	7	7	-	-	2	2	2	2
S	35	28	5	4	23	11	13	12	5	5	1	1	1	1
T	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
U	2	2	1	1	2	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
Total	150	110	16	11	187	63	99	93	54	53	9	9	9	9

The diversity in the use of syntactic patterns, across almost all compliment categories, is interesting. Nearly every topic received compliments in a variety of syntactic patterns, which was largely true whether EM26 was included or not. The only exception to this is in relation to compliments on ability: there were more different syntactic patterns used when EM26 was included, but this did not change the composition of the results overall.

Table 4.8 shows that pattern G is the most frequently occurring syntactic pattern for compliments on appearance, ability, and personality, followed by pattern S (see Table 4.6, Section 4.3.1 for a description of each syntactic pattern).

It is not surprising that compliments on characteristics that are highly visual, such as appearance and in some instances, ability, are realized most frequently via adjective and the adverb *bien* ('good').

Surprisingly, per Table 4.8, the majority of compliments relating to friendship were implicit compliments (pattern J). This illustrates the value that Ecuadorian men place on friendship: they appear to be willing to put in extra thought to give a compliment on their relationships with the participants.

In this section I have presented the results of syntactic patterns used by Ecuadorian men to realize compliments to other men. The results show a preference for adjectives and adjectival forms of compliments, as well as use of the adverb *bien*, across nearly all topics of compliments. The results suggest that topic of compliment has little bearing on which syntactic form is chosen, save the topic of friendship, which primarily used implicit forms of compliments. Implicit compliments in the Ecuadorian corpus are fully discussed in Section 4.4.

4.4 Implicit compliments

In Chapter 2.3.1.2 an implicit compliment is defined as one in which the value judgment of the compliment is presupposed and/or implied (Herbert 1997:488). In other words, the positive message of the compliment is implied and the hearer's understanding of the positive message depends on whether the person giving the compliment has correctly analyzed the hearer's values.

Placencia and Yépez Lasso (1999) include the syntactic pattern NP as an implicit compliment (p. 107). Here I have given NP its own category, and do not consider compliments of this form in my discussion of implicit compliments, instead I focus the discussion of implicit compliments on those that are non-

conventional or creative in form. That is not to say that compliments consisting of a noun phrase alone are not implicit compliments, as they often require the hearer to make inferences to understand the positive message (Boyle 2000).

The Ecuadorian corpus yielded a good number of implicit compliments (approximately 10%), which were primarily concentrated on the topic of friendship, and, when EM26 was included in analysis, on the topic of ability. The majority of implicit compliments on ability were directed at EM26 (18 out of 22); Example 4.14 gives examples of implicit compliments with respect to ability.

Example 4. 14 Implicit compliment on ability

- (a) EM18's picture of his face, made up of his name written repeatedly

Male 1: *como hago profe para hacerme una asi* ('how do I do it professor to make one for myself like this')

- (b) EM26's photo of a logo with a man smoking with his thumb up, advertising his tattoo services

Male 1: *en kito te espero para q me rayes el brazo* ('I wait for you in Quito so you can stripe my arm')

In order to understand Examples 4.14(a) as a compliment, one has to assume that EM18 is proud of the picture of his face, a relatively safe assumption as it appeared as EM18's profile picture. Implicit compliments on FB are often accompanied by lengthier exchanges, which help shed light on the intention and reception of the compliment. Understanding the implicit compliment directed at EM26 Example 4.14(b) is simpler, both because the photo is an advertisement of EM26's tattoo business, and because EM26 responds as follows:

Example 4.14, continued

EM26: *con gusto hermano ya sabes ..pulgoso jajaja forever* ('with pleasure brother, any time .. fleabag ha ha ha forever')

EM26 accepts Male 1's request to give him a tattoo, thereby accepting Male 1's compliment on his ability without actually addressing it. This example demonstrates Boyle's (2000) assertion that one way of realizing an implicit compliment is by referring to something that the speaker believes that the hearer is proud of (p. 53). By asking EM26 to give him a tattoo, Male 1 is supporting EM26's tattoo business and therefore his ability, which EM26 seems to recognize in his response.

Implicit compliments on appearance produced a few instances of the strategy described by Boyle (2000) of realizing an implicit compliment: comparing the complementee to somebody that the complimenter believes that the complementee admires (p. 53). Recipients of implicit compliments on appearance were compared to Axl Rose (a rock star) and James Bond (a fictional spy). Additionally, one implicit compliment on appearance compared the recipient and the setting of the photo to a movie, as in Example 4.15.

Example 4. 15 Implicit compliment on appearance

Photo of EM18 sitting on a rock next to the sea

Male 1: *VE.. EL NAUFRAGO [EM18] ..QUE BUENA PELÍCULA NO SABIA QUE TÚ LO HICISTE* ('HEY.. CASTAWAY [EM18] ..WHAT A GOOD MOVIE I DIDN'T KNOW THAT YOU MADE IT')

EM18 responded to this photo by saying: "living here is not what it seems." Unfortunately, this response (excluded from responses because it is in English, see Chapter 3.5.3) does not illuminate how EM18 understood Male 1's compliment, and Male 1 does not follow up.

The topic of compliment that received the greatest number of implicit compliments was friendship. This suggests that Ecuadorian men value friendship and take more time and effort to make compliments that are creative and thoughtful in order to express approval and support for their friendships. Chapter 4.2.6 analyzed the nature and extent of compliments on friendship in the Ecuadorian corpus. Here I present examples of implicit compliments on friendship, particularly the nostalgia that seems to be a common theme amongst Ecuadorian men.

Example 4. 16 Implicit compliment on friendship

EM31's photo of word, *miembros* ('members') written in a graffiti-style.

EM20: *lindos recuerdos pasan por la mente viendo ese logo :P*

('beautiful memories pass through the mind viewing this logo :P')

Male 1: *me da nostalgia pana...como ha pasado el tiempo...se les quiere y extraña* ('this makes me nostalgic buddy...how time has passed...love you and miss you all')

This example demonstrates several things: first, Ecuadorian men can be overtly affectionate with each other, and are willing to express this in certain contexts. Second, Ecuadorian men are capable of producing elaborate, non-formulaic compliments, particularly with respect to friendship. The majority of implicit compliments on friendship were directed at EM31, as was the case with explicit compliments on friendship (discussed in Section 4.2.6).

Although EM31 received the majority of implicit compliments on friendship (10 out of 19), four other participants received them as well. Three out of the remaining four participants were not connected to EM31 on FB, yet the implicit compliments that they received on friendship had a similar theme:

nostalgia for times spent together in the past, which makes sense as the photos attracting implicit compliments on friendship often consisted of groups of friends in their school uniforms. Despite the fact that these implicit compliments on friendship did not follow a given syntactic pattern, a pattern with respect to content does emerge: reflecting and reminiscing on old times spent together, and expressing a wish to repeat them.

Ecuadorian men use implicit compliments with some frequency on FB, preferring them in compliments on friendship. Despite being inherently creative and without a set syntactic form, the results show that content-wise, implicit compliments on friendship on FB among Ecuadorian men are constrained in terms of content. Analyzing topics and syntactic patterns of compliments has given a foundational picture of Ecuadorian male complimenting behavior on FB. In the next section, I discuss supportive elements that Ecuadorian men deploy when making compliments on FB, giving a more complete picture of Ecuadorian male FB behavior.

4.5 Supportive elements in compliments

As in face-to-face communication, Ecuadorian men used a variety of supportive elements when complimenting one another on FB. Supportive elements is an umbrella term used here which encompasses various elements that occur along with written compliments, rather than on their own with no further context. Types of supportive elements found here include textual depictions of laughter (e.g., *ja ja*), interjections (e.g., *oye!*), emoticons (e.g., :-)), nominal forms of address (e.g., *pana*), written depictions of physical affection

(e.g., *abrazos*), textual alteration (e.g., vowel elongation), and repeated punctuation (e.g., multiple question marks).

In this study, analysis of supportive elements does not follow Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) notion of supportive elements in terms of internal and external modifiers, but instead offers a perspective of supportive elements that is adapted to the text-based, asynchronous medium of FB, and includes a variety of elements.

The supportive elements here have been considered in various sources, but have previously not been combined and addressed all together with respect to compliments on FB. Yus (2011:189) discusses the notion of oralized written texts, which use creative punctuation and typography as a substitution for paralinguistic cues. He uses the term text deformation interchangeably with text oralization, and includes the creative use of punctuation, capitalization, and emoticons in this description (p. 179).

The use of supportive elements on FB as observed in this corpus appears to fulfill a variety of functions, such as emulating paralinguistic cues, as described by Yus (2011), clarifying attitude (Yus 2005), adding affect, and lightening the mood, among others. In this section, I discuss the frequency of supportive elements, as well as their use in compliments with respect to topics of compliments. Finally, I discuss the use of 'like' as a supportive element by Ecuadorian men when used in response to photographs.

4.5.1 Overview of results

The 524 compliments given by Ecuadorian men were accompanied by 793 total supportive elements, meaning that many compliments were

accompanied by multiple supportive elements. Table 4.9 gives an overview of supportive elements, and the categories of compliments with which they occur.

Table 4. 9 Supportive elements vis-à-vis compliment topics, with and without EM26

	Appearance	Appearance w/o EM26	Possessions	Possessions w/o EM26	Ability	Ability w/o EM26	Personality	Personality w/o EM26	Friendship	Friendship w/o EM26	Children	Children w/o EM26	Pets	Pets w/o EM26	Total	Total w/o EM26
Laughter	53	37	4	3	27	5	50	47	16	15	2	2	4	4	156	113
Interjection	2	1	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	5	4
Emoticon	2	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	2	2	-	-	-	-	6	4
Form of address	52	39	4	2	80	26	34	31	14	13	4	4	2	2	190	117
<i>Abrazos</i>	2	1	1	-	2	1	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	4
Textual alteration	61	47	4	4	61	25	36	35	17	17	4	4	3	3	186	134
Punctuation	73	49	9	6	90	26	41	38	24	24	5	5	1	1	243	149
Total	245	174	22	15	262	85	165	155	74	72	15	15	10	10	793	525

Compliments on ability were accompanied by the largest number of supportive elements, but as with the results of topics of compliments (see Section 4.2), the inclusion of EM26 impacts the composition of the results: when EM26 is included, supportive elements occurred most with compliments on ability (262), followed by compliments on appearance (245). However, when EM26 is excluded, supportive elements occurred most in compliments on appearance (174), followed by personality (155).

The types of supportive elements used in compliments do not change significantly whether EM26 is included or excluded: use of repeated punctuation marks remains the most favored form of supportive element. For this reason, the discussion of supportive elements in the following sections will not show results with EM26 excluded. See Appendix E for alternate versions of Tables 4.10 and 4.11, comparing the results with EM26 included and excluded.

Use of supportive elements not only varied with respect to compliment topics, but also according to the syntactic pattern of compliments, displayed in Table 4.10.

Table 4. 10 Supportive elements vis-à-vis syntactic patterns

Syntactic pattern	Laughter	Interjection	Emoticon	Nominal Form of Address	<i>Abrazos</i>	Textual Alteration	Repeated Punctuation	Total
A	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	3
B	13	1	-	18	-	14	21	67
D	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	3
E	-	-	-	1	-	2	1	4
F	26	-	1	26	3	17	32	105
G	44	1	1	47	-	59	64	216
I	2	-	-	2	-	3	1	8
J	15	-	1	17	1	16	21	71
L	10	2	1	16	-	12	20	61
P	5	-	-	5	-	4	4	18
Q	5	1	2	11	-	6	10	35
R	9	-	-	12	1	17	24	63
S	24	-	-	32	2	31	37	126
U	3	-	-	2	-	4	4	13
Total	156	5	6	190	7	186	243	793

Table 4.10 demonstrates that in addition to being the most frequently used syntactic pattern (see Section 4.3), pattern G was accompanied by the greatest number of supportive elements. This is unsurprising, as pattern G is the simplest form of compliment, often comprised of just one word. The use of supportive elements adds emphasis to such compliments, lending clarity and sincerity to brief evaluations.

Supportive elements are used so frequently in conjunction with compliments that they are conspicuous by their absence. Table 4.11 shows the

compliment categories and syntactic patterns where no supportive elements appeared.

Table 4. 11 No supportive elements

Syntactic Pattern	Appearance	Possessions	Ability	Personality	Friendship	Children	Pets	Total
B	3	-	3	-	2	-	-	8
E	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
F	1	1	3	-	3	-	-	8
G	4	-	8	-	-	-	1	13
I	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
J	1	-	12	-	1	-	-	14
L	1	-	2	1	2	-	2	8
O	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
P	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	3
Q	-	-	5	2	1	-	-	8
R	1	2	1	-	-	1	-	5
S	8	2	5	1	1	-	-	17
U	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
Total	22	6	41	5	11	2	3	90 (17.2%)

What stands out from Table 4.11 is that an absence of supportive elements occurs most frequently in the category of ability, which was also the category accompanied by the most supportive elements. The overall absence of supportive elements is almost identical whether EM26 is included with the data or not (17.2% vs. 16.5%, see Appendix E, Table 4.11(a)). This seems to suggest that regardless of category, supportive elements are used at a consistent rate overall.

Table 4.11 shows that pattern S has the highest incidence of no use of supportive element, followed closely by patterns J and G. It is interesting that pattern J used supportive elements so infrequently, as implicit compliments call for mutual understanding and a shared background by the speaker and the

hearer (see Chapter 2.3.1.2), which has greater probability for misunderstanding. Curiously, FB friends of participants did not add further supportive elements to many of their implicit compliments, suggesting a confidence and intimacy in the relationships and shared backgrounds of the interlocutors, which makes additional supportive elements superfluous. There were 57 total implicit compliments, 14 (24.6%) of which were not accompanied by supportive elements, which is higher than the average for the corpus as a whole.

Unlike pattern J, pattern S leaves less room for misinterpretation: use of an adjective accompanying a noun phrase is clear in terms of conveying a positive message. This could explain why some men who used pattern S to compliment did not include a supportive element. A few examples of compliments using category S alone, without a supportive element, are listed in Example 4.17.

Example 4. 17 Compliments in category S with no supportive element

- (a) *Bonita esa foto* ('that photo is pretty')
- (b) *Buen trabajo* ('good work')

Syntactic pattern G is similarly clear in conveying a positive assessment. Adjectives used in pattern G without any supportive elements present were not the simple adjective, *bueno* ('good'), but slightly more emphatic ones, including: *elegante* ('elegant'), *brutal* ('amazing'), *fabuloso* ('fabulous'), *magnifico* ('magnificent'), and *excelente* ('excellent'), among others.

In the next sections I discuss supportive elements in more detail, beginning with use of repeated punctuation, which occurred most often as a

supportive element. I then discuss nominal forms of address, textual alteration, and laughter, interjections, emoticons, and *abrazos* ('hugs') in one section.

4.5.2 Repeated punctuation

Punctuation as a supportive element in this study involves any repeated use of the same form of punctuation, for example, a string of multiple question marks. Yus (2005:160), in his study of Internet chat rooms, views the use of multiple exclamation marks and question marks as tools to aid the reader in interpreting the messenger’s underlying attitude. This view of repeated punctuation seems to extend to compliments: the complimenter intends to express his positive attitude and includes strings of punctuation to achieve this (see also Herring, 2012:3). Figueras Bates (2014:136) labels the exaggerated use of punctuation in online settings as rhetoric-emotive punctuation, which is not only used to emulate spoken communication, but to convey a range of linguistic and non-linguistic content (p. 144).

The use of multiple exclamation marks in compliments on FB was observed by Placencia and Lower (2013:635) in compliments among women in AmE on FB, as well as Eslami et al. (2019) in their study of compliments in Persian on FB. Neither of these studies noted the use of multiple question marks or ellipsis marks, or combinations of these in compliments, which occurred frequently in the Ecuadorian corpus, as detailed in Table 4.12.

Table 4. 12 Use of repeated punctuation as a supportive element

	Appearance	Possessions	Ability	Personality	Friendship	Children	Pets	Total

Ellipsis marks	33	7	37	20	10	3	-	110
+Exclamation marks	12	1	11	5	10	1	-	40
+Question Marks	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	7
Exclamation marks	27	1	40	15	3	1	-	87
+Ellipsis marks + Question marks	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
+Question marks	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	2
Question	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2
Total	73	9	90	41	24	5	1	243

Table 4.12 shows that use of ellipsis marks on their own was the most common way that Ecuadorian men used punctuation in their compliments in order to add emphasis or affect, followed by the use of multiple exclamation marks. It is surprising that ellipsis marks were used more frequently than exclamation marks, as exclamation marks are often associated with excitement and positivity, positivity being something that one would want to convey in a compliment. However, by combining the use of exclamation marks on their own in conjunction with other forms of punctuation, multiple exclamation marks are used with 130 compliments, or in 53.5% of compliments using punctuation as a supportive element. Ellipsis marks, however, are still used more frequently, even in conjunction with other forms: 63% of the time.

This result may be a unique feature of Ecuadorian male communication on FB (see Chapter 5.5.3 for a discussion of the Spanish male results, and Chapter 6 for a comparison of the two groups). When Ecuadorian men on FB used multiple punctuation marks, it typically took the forms shown in Example 4.18.

Example 4. 18 Use of repeated punctuation

- (a) *Que chevere...!!!* ('how cool...!!!')
- (b) *jajajjaa buenaza...iiiiiii* ('ha so good...iiiiiii')

4.5.3 Nominal forms of address

Nominal forms of address (hereafter, forms of address) have been studied in a variety of contexts, and are widely thought to give an indication of the nature of social relationships, and fulfilling a variety of functions, depending on where they occur in an utterance (see Leech, 1999), or which speech acts they occur with (see Placencia, 1997), for example. Placencia et al. (2015), in their comparative study of nominal forms of address among university students in Quito, Seville, and Santiago (Chile), suggest that forms of address are related to expressions of affect and involvement, which is how I view them in relation to compliments here.

Ecuadorian men used forms of address occurred frequently as supportive elements with compliments, consistent with the findings of Placencia et al. (2015:558). Table 4.9 illustrated how forms of address occurred most frequently along with compliments on ability and appearance. This study does consider the position of nominal forms of address in compliments (see Leech, 1999) for several reasons, the primary reason being that the main focus here is on compliments and forms of address are considered as supplementary elements.

There was a great deal of variety in forms of address used by men along with compliments. Table 4.13 shows the forms of address used with compliments by Ecuadorian men, with respect to the topics of compliments with which they appeared. Forms of address in Table 4.13 are grouped in accordance with Placencia et al.'s categories (2015:557).

Table 4. 13 Forms of address in compliments

	App.	Poss.	Ability	Person.	Friend.	Kids	Pets	Total
Names								
Altered name	8	1	9	5	-	-	-	23

Full name	2	1	2	4	-	-	-	9
Friendship term								
<i>Pana</i> ('buddy')	9	-	6	3	6	-	-	24
<i>Amigo</i> ('friend')	1	-	2	1	2	1	-	7
<i>Compadre</i> ('friend')	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
Family terms								
Brother	7	-	17	4	1	-	1	30
<i>Hermano</i> ('brother')	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	2
<i>Mijo</i> ('my son')	4	-	2	3	4	2	-	15
<i>Ñño</i> ('brother')	2	-	8	-	-	-	-	10
<i>Primo</i> ('cousin')	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	3
Descriptive terms								
<i>Loco</i> ('crazy')	4	1	10	4	1	-	1	21
<i>Maestro</i> ('master')	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2
Man	1	-	3	4	-	-	-	8
<i>Muchacho</i> ('guy')	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2
<i>Viejo</i> ('old man')	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
Multiple forms	3	-	6	2	-	-	-	11
Single occurrence	10	-	8	1	-	-	-	19
Total	52	4	80	34	14	4	2	190

The forms of address as written in Table 4.13 are simplified versions of the forms that appeared in the corpus. For example, Table 4.13 encapsulates all variations of 'brother,' which included *bro*, *mi bro* ('my bro'), *mi brother* ('my brother'), and *broster*, as well as alternative spellings, such as *brou* and *brow*.

Apart from 'brother,' Ecuadorian men used *pana* when giving compliments, as well as a variety of altered names of the participants. When I classified a form of address as an altered name, I included names altered by means of diminutives, such as *-ito* or *-in*. I discuss the use of diminutives more thoroughly in section 4.5.4. Some of the altered names were completely different than the participant's given name, and others consisted of shortened names. I classified shortened names and names with diminutive suffixes as altered names rather than given names because it seemed to better capture the intent of using the name.

4.5.4 Textual alteration

Yus (2005) uses the term textual deformation to refer to a variety of elements, including repetition of letters and non-standard uses of punctuation and spellings. Androutsopoulos (2000) focuses on non-standard spellings, which represent features of spoken language translated into written forms. He divides non-standard spelling into six categories; the one most applicable here is what Androutsopoulos calls prosodic spellings, which simulate word stress by using capital letters and vowel elongation (p. 521).

The term textual alteration is used here as an umbrella term to include all examples of changes made to text in order to add affect. This occurs in various forms, including augmentative and diminutive suffixes (hereafter augmentatives and diminutives), capital letters (cf. Heath, 2018), elongation, repetition of words, and use of special characters. The use of augmentative and diminutive suffixes has not been included in discussions of textual alteration in past research, but they fit under this larger heading because they are methods of altering words to add extra meaning or emphasis. Forms of textual alteration occurred both on their own and in conjunction with other forms, as shown in Table 4.14, in relation to compliment categories.

Table 4. 14 Use of textural alteration as a supportive element

	Appearance	Possessions	Ability	Personality	Friendship	Children	Pets	Total
Augmentative	1	-	8	5	1	1	-	16
+Capitals	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	3
+Capitals + Elongation	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
+Diminutive	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
+Diminutive + Repetition			1					1

+Elongation	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
Capitals	8	1	9	8	1	-	-	27
+Diminutive	1	-	-	-	2	1	-	4
+Elongation	4	-	3	1	2	-	-	10
+Elongation + Diminutive	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
+Repetition	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Diminutive	8	1	2	3	4	2	3	23
+Repetition	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	3
Elongation	21	1	29	8	4	-	-	63
+Diminutive	1	-	2	3	1	-	-	7
+Repetition	2	-	-	2	1	-	-	5
Repetition	8	1	1	4	-	-	-	14
Special Characters	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total	58	4	61	36	17	4	3	183

Table 4.14 shows that elongation was the most popular form of textual alteration used in compliments by a wide margin. Elongation encompasses repetition of one or more letters in a word in order to add emphasis. Example 4.19 demonstrates the use of elongation in an otherwise ordinary compliment.

Example 4. 19 Use of elongation as supportive element

Photo of EM26 next to a graffiti drawing of himself

Male 1: *muy bueeeno!* ('very good!')

On its own, *muy bueno* conveys a positive message, but it does not carry much weight, nor does it evidence much thought or effort on the part of the man giving the compliment. It requires little extra effort, but typing extra letters helps the reader to imagine the speaker saying the word out loud, making it sound much more excited and positive.

Repetition refers to repeating the same word or set of words within the same compliment. Words were typically repeated together, as in Example 4.20.

Example 4. 20 Use of repetition in compliments

(a) *bn bn la foto* ('good good the photo')

(b) *jajjaa buena buena* ('ha ha good good')

As discussed in Section 4.5.3, diminutives were often used with forms of address, whether that was as part of a participant's name, or some other form of address, such as *loco*, changed to *loquito* or *lokito* ('little buddy'). One of the main effects of diminutives is to give a friendly tone to a statement (Butt, et al, 2019:554), which certainly seems to be the case as observed in use along with compliments on FB. Use of diminutives were not limited to nominal forms of address and were also used frequently with the word *foto* ('photo'), changing it to *fotico* ('little photo'), as in Example 4.21.

Example 4. 21 Use of diminutive in compliments

- (a) *ta chevere la fotico...* ('the photo is cool...')
- (b) *cheveree la foticoooo* ('the photo is cool')

Example 4.21(b) shows the use of multiple supportive elements in conjunction with a diminutive: elongation in both the adjective (*cheveree*) and the noun (*la foticoooo*), elevating the compliment and giving it more affect.

Butt et al. (2015:557) state that augmentatives *-azo* and *-ote* can imply admiration, while *-ísimo* intensifies the original meaning of a word, and is not considered a superlative form (p. 63). Ecuadorian men frequently used augmentatives with basic adjectives in repetition and elongation (see Table 4.14), presumably in an attempt to give the adjectives more weight. Augmentatives were most frequently used with the adjective *bueno* ('good'), changing it to *buenazo* or *buenísima* ('very good'). Interestingly, Ecuadorian men also used augmentatives with the noun *foto* ('photo'), as they had done with diminutives, changing the noun to *fotazo* ('great photo'). Apart from using augmentatives with *bueno* and *foto*, Ecuadorian men were slightly more creative in deploying augmentative suffixes than they were with diminutive suffixes.

Some examples of the variety in use of augmentatives are shown in Example 4.22.

Example 4. 22 Use of augmentative endings in compliments

- (a) *locasa la foto* ('so crazy the photo')
- (b) *q grupaso!!* ('what a great group')

Although Ecuadorian men had a tendency to use augmentative suffixes more regularly in conjunction with particular adjectives (*bueno*) and nouns (*foto*), there seems to be no definite rule as to when and where augmentatives may appear. In the compliments shown in Example 4.22, the augmentative seems to replace a separate intensifier or adjective, as in 4.22(b). Instead of saying *q buen grupo* ('what a good group'), for example, the complimenter has cut the adjective (*bueno*) entirely, instead modifying the noun (*grupo*) with the augmentative *-azo*. This may be an example of users economizing on effort spent on FB to make a compliment and deploying methods that require less effort.

Similar to what we saw with the use of multiple punctuation marks, various types of textual alteration were used together, but were more frequently observed on their own. For example, while augmentatives were sometimes used in conjunction with diminutives or capital letters, they were most frequently used alone in compliments.

4.5.5 Laughter and infrequently used supportive elements

Yus (2011:164) describes how chat room users find ways to compensate for a loss of visual cues. This includes the use of emoticons, as well as what Yus calls autonomous stage direction, which is expressing nonverbal behavior with

its closest written depiction (p. 173). Herring (2012) includes written laughter with spellings that represent prosody or non-linguistic sounds (p. 3).

Ecuadorian men frequently used written laughter in compliments, with little variation in the ways in which laughter is expressed. Laughter was the fourth most frequently occurring supportive element (see Table 4.9), and occurred most frequently in compliments on appearance and personality, which is perhaps unsurprising, as those topics are quite personal by nature, making misunderstanding highly undesirable (see below, this section). Compliments taking the form of Pattern G ((Intens) + ADJ) had the most incidences of laughter accompanying them, also not surprising, as it is the briefest form of compliment, and the addition of laughter can aid in expressing intent.

Other forms of supportive elements occurred infrequently. These include interjections (see Yus, 2005), emoticons (see Yus, 2005; and Dresner and Herring, 2010), and written depictions of physical affection, namely *abrazos* ('hugs') (see Yus, 2011). There were only five compliments that contained an interjection, all of them occurring at the beginning of the utterance. The interjections in compliments in this corpus include: *oye* ('hey'), and *wow* ('wow').

The lack of emoticons in compliments was surprising as in the corpus overall, Ecuadorian men used emoticons frequently. Among comments that were not compliments or compliment responses, Ecuadorian men used emoticons 208 times, yet there were only six instances of emoticons co-occurring with a compliment, in a variety of compliment topics (see Table 4.9). It seems that Ecuadorian men are willing and able to use emoticons, just not in conjunction with compliments. In Chapter 6, I discuss some observations on Ecuadorian men and at times their hyper masculine presentation of themselves, their purported

views on homosexuality, which may relate to the lack of emoticons with compliments.

Written expressions of physical affection occurred often in the corpus, however, as with emoticons, they appear infrequently in compliments between Ecuadorian men. The use of written physical affection was split between three participants and appeared at the end of a compliment in three out of the seven instances. There were two examples of *abrazos* being embellished slightly: those were *un gran abrazo* ('a big hug') and *un abrazo enorme* ('an enormous hug'). As with emoticons, I suspect that the lack of written expressions of physical affection in Ecuadorian male compliments may have something to do with cultural views of masculinity.

4.5.6 'Like'

West and Trester describe FB's 'like' function as a "clickable response...signaling...approval of [a post's] content (2013:138). 'Like' is represented on FB by a 'thumbs up' icon, further promoting the idea of approval implicit in the use of 'like'. (see Chapter 2.4.3.1.2). West and Trester (2013) state that the use of 'like' appeals to the positive face of both the 'liker' and the recipient, though it can have a negative connotation of requiring minimum effort (p. 145).

When 'like' occurs in conjunction with a compliment, or on its own in response to a photo, it functions as a supportive element, adding further positive weight to the utterance. Table 4.15 shows how Ecuadorian men, women, and the study participants, used 'like' on FB.

Table 4. 15 Use of 'like' in the Ecuadorian corpus

1	2			3		
	2a	2b	2c	3a	3b	3c
	Total 'likes' comments			Total 'likes' photos		
	Own	Men	Women	Own	Men	Women
EM1	167			481		
	79	43	45	105	198	178
EM2	22			352		
	0	17	5	0	228	124
EM3	QUIT THE STUDY					
EM4	0			34		
	0	0	0	0	19	15
EM5	NO PHOTOS					
EM6	NO PHOTOS					
EM7	277			242		
	184	26	67	11	80	151
EM8	0			128		
	0	0	0	5	19	104
EM9	0			98		
	0	0	0	1	50	47
EM10	51			84		
	24	4	23	9	15	60
EM11	198			557		
	49	89	60	42	148	367
EM12	0			22		
	0	0	0	6	12	4
EM13	112			218		
	79	9	24	49	71	98
EM14	75			237		
	21	10	44	3	60	174
EM15	43			161		
	1	10	32	8	27	126
EM16	209			579 ⁸		
	120	35	54	51	222	303
EM17	170			514		
	109	17	44	0	158	356
EM18	1,359			1,759		
	979	194	186	289	619	851
EM19	13			25		
	2	9	2	0	9	16

⁸ Two 'likes' from *Cultura Arte Musica* ('Culture Art Music,' a group), one 'like' from *Ahora en Quito* ('Now in Quito,' a FB group), therefore no sex indicated for these 'likes'

EM20	76			264		
	5	22	49	12	66	186
EM21	EXCLUDED					
EM22	EXCLUDED					
EM23	EXCLUDED					
EM24	84			190		
	30	15	39	19	57	114
EM25	0			0		
	0	0	0	0	0	0
EM26	1,577 ⁹			4,033 ¹⁰		
	1,148	155	271	28	1,186	2,803
EM27	5			37		
	0	0	5	1	4	32
EM28	39			111		
	10	17	12	0	65	46
EM29	10			73		
	9	0	1	6	13	54
EM30	126			312		
	85	10	31	7	117	188
EM31	27			85		
	0	10	17	0	27	58
EM32	29			106		
	17	3	9	17	37	52
TOTAL	4,669			10,702		
	2,946	689	1,020	663	3,480	6,487

Column 2 in Table 4.15 refers to ‘likes’ of all comments, which includes compliments, for each participant, and column 3 pertains to ‘likes’ of photos. This is further broken down into three sub-columns: 2a pertaining to the participant himself, this is the number of times a participant ‘liked’ a comment on his own FB page, which is a form of self-praise, defined by Dayter as uttering a positive statement about oneself (2014:92). While ‘like’ is not an utterance as such, it is a positive evaluation of oneself, though on a continuum of self-promotion, its use is relatively passive (see Dayter).

⁹ Three ‘likes’ from a band (*Los Txk*)

¹⁰ Seven ‘likes’ from a band (*Medussah Banda*), nine from another band (*Los Txk*)

As expected, participants' FB friends used 'likes' more frequently in conjunction with photos than did the participants (Table 4.15, columns 2b and 3b). On the other hand, the selected participants used 'like' more frequently in relation to comments than other men. This is not unexpected: it seems natural that the participants would use the quick option of 'like' as a response or acknowledgement of a friend's comment. Many of these 'likes' were in response to compliments given, rather than just a comment, discussed further in Section 4.6. It is interesting that overall, participants 'liked' so many of their own photos.

Ecuadorian men used 'like' more frequently than giving written compliments on photos. This is unsurprising because 'liking' a photo involves only a click of an icon: a very simple and nearly effortless form of interaction. However, this is slightly misleading because while 'like' is clearly a positive assessment, it cannot automatically be equated with a compliment. For example, the photo described in Example 4.23 received two 'likes'. Due to the content of the photo, it is unlikely that these 'likes' were intended as compliments.

Example 4. 23 Use of 'like' unlikely to be a compliment

EM12's photo of a small dog standing on its hind legs, front paws clasped together in prayer, with the caption, *Diosito por favor que nadie me invite a beber hooy* ('Dear god please may nobody invite me to drink today').

EM12: *y ahora q es viernes jaajaja* ('and now that it's Friday ha ha')

EM1: *jajajajaaa El Diablo empuja..* ('haha The devil pushes..')

Photo 'liked' by EM12 and another male friend

It could be argued that the 'likes' associated with the photo in Example 4.23 pertain to EM12's personality, specifically his sense of humor. Indeed, there were some examples of memes posted by participants that attracted comments,

some of which I coded as compliments. However, the use of a 'like' alone in such a context, without more information, can only remain as a 'like': an ambiguous positive assessment. For this reason, when 'like' is given in response to a photo, I have classified it as a type of supportive element.

As demonstrated by Table 4.15, women typically 'liked' the Ecuadorian male participants' photos more than men did. This was not true across the board; indeed, for six out of the 26 participants, men 'liked' photographs more than women did. Although this does not prove that men compliment as much as women, it casts doubt on the notion that men do not ever or rarely give compliments. While I do not consider 'like' as equal to a compliment, I do view 'like' as a supportive element and a positive assessment of sorts and therefore indicative of Ecuadorian men's willingness to engage in forms of politeness similar to complimenting.

4.6 Compliment responses

The focus of this section is compliment responses given by Ecuadorian men in response to compliments from other men. This information does not exist in a vacuum, therefore Table 4.16 presents the Ecuadorian male compliment response data in a larger context, which includes the total comments given to the male participants by other men, as well as total comments and compliments given by women to the male participants.

Table 4. 16 Overview of Ecuadorian male behavior on Facebook

Total photos with comments	2,939
Total comments (not participant)	15,169
Made by males	9,512
Made by females	5,657
Total participant comments	4,551

Total compliments	2,034
Made by males	524
Made by females	1,510
Total written compliment responses	479
Responses to males	126
Responses to females	353
Total 'likes' of compliments	752
'Likes' of male compliments	185
'Likes' of female compliments	567
Total Likes (all comments)	2,946

Table 4.16 demonstrates that Ecuadorian men are active in terms of posting photographs and making comments and compliments on FB, but they are less active in responding to compliments, whether the compliments originate from men or women.

The Ecuadorian male participants responded to 24% of compliments received from men and women, a fascinating result because there were many more opportunities to respond to compliments given by women. This result suggests that Ecuadorian men may value compliments received from men more than those received from women.

The use of 'likes' in response to a compliment presents an interesting point of discussion. Table 4.16 shows that Ecuadorian male participants used 'like' frequently: participants 'liked' compliments from FB friends 37% of the time. This number is quite a bit higher than the response rate to compliments (24%), which suggests that Ecuadorian male participants favored using 'like' on its own as a response to compliments, and used 'like' much more often when responding to compliments from women than from men.

4.6.1 Effect of compliment topic on compliment response rates

According to the results of the Ecuadorian compliment response data, the topic of compliment appears to have some impact on whether a compliment is more or less likely to receive a response. Table 4.17 shows the distribution of compliments to Ecuadorian men with respect to compliment topic, and shows the frequency of responses in each category.

Table 4. 17 Compliment responses vis-à-vis compliment categories

		Total male compliments	Number of responses	Percentage of responses per category
Categories of compliments	Appearance	150(28.6%)	41 (32.5%)	27.3%
	Possessions	16 (3.1%)	8 (6.3%)	50%
	Ability	187 (35.7%)	46 (36.5%)	24.2%
	Personality	99 (18.9%)	24 (19%)	24.2%
	Friendship	54 (10.3%)	4 (3.2%)	7.4%
	Child's appearance	9 (1.7%)	2 (1.6%)	22.2%
	Pets	9 (1.7%)	1 (0.8%)	11.1%
		524	126	

Table 4.17 shows that Ecuadorian men were most likely to respond to compliments relating to possessions (50% response rate). Compliments on possessions often involve questions as to where an item was obtained. In examining the compliments on possessions that received responses in the Ecuadorian corpus, I have found this to not be the case, surprisingly: none of the compliments on possessions that received a response included a question, suggesting that there is something else that motivates Ecuadorian men to respond to compliments relating to possessions.

Apart from possessions, compliments on appearance, ability, personality, and a child's appearance were almost equally likely to receive a response. This suggests that the topic of compliment has relatively little impact on whether or not Ecuadorian men respond. Compliments on friendship had the lowest

response rate, another surprising result given the affectionate nature that such compliments often had. However, a lack of results on this topic coincides with the notion that Ecuadorian men display a hyper masculine version of themselves on FB, an image that does not match responses to an affectionate topic of compliment like friendship.

As discussed in Section 4.2, the majority of compliments given by Ecuadorian men to other men in this study had to do with ability, largely due to the number of photos of EM26's artistic works. This skewed the results in favor of ability as the most frequently complimented topic. Table 4.18 shows a comparison of the compliment results when excluding EM26.

Table 4. 18 Comparison of Ecuadorian response data with EM26 excluded

		Total male compliments		Number of responses (M)	
		w/ EM26	w/o EM26	w/ EM26	w/o EM26
Categories of compliments	Appearance	150 (28.6%)	110 (31.6%)	41 (32.5%)	33 (37.5%)
	Possessions	16 (3.1%)	11 (3.2%)	8 (6.3%)	7 (8%)
	Ability	187 (35.7%)	63 (18.1%)	46 (36.5%)	18 (20.5%)
	Personality	99 (18.9%)	93 (26.7%)	24 (19%)	23 (26.1%)
	Friendship	54 (10.3%)	53 (15.2%)	4 (3.2%)	4 (4.5%)
	Child's appearance	9 (1.7%)	9 (2.6%)	2 (1.6%)	2 (2.3%)
	Pets	9 (1.7%)	9 (2.6%)	1 (0.8%)	1 (1.1%)
		524	348	126	88

Excluding EM26 also shifts the response results: compliments on appearance, rather than ability, receive the majority of responses, with compliments on personality coming in second, and responses to compliments on ability slipping to third.

4.6.2 Compliment response taxonomy

I applied a modified version of Holmes's (1986) taxonomy of compliment responses to this corpus, as described in Chapter 3.5.5 because it provided the

best fit for the results, despite the original taxonomy being developed for compliment responses in English. Fitting naturally occurring, often very informal, responses neatly into one box proved difficult at times, and necessitated making sometimes-arbitrary decisions, for example, when responses engaged multiple sub-strategies.

As in other studies on compliment responses in SNS (see 2.3.3), the most common type of response here was no response at all (see Table 4.19). The strategy of no response was followed by ‘like’ on its own. The most frequent written response was acceptance, with deflect or evade following behind. In the Ecuadorian corpus, there was only one instance of a compliment being rejected.

Table 4. 19 Categories of compliment responses used by Ecuadorian men

Response type	Number of responses
Accept	74
Appreciation token	24
Emoticon (w/o comment)	0
Like (w/o comment)	185
Agreeing utterance	27
Upgrade	18
Downgrade/qualifying utterance	3
Return compliment	2
Reject	1
Disagreeing utterance	1
Challenge sincerity	0
Deflect/Evade	51
Shift credit	4
Informative comment	12
Ignore	25
Legitimate evasion	8
Request reassurance/repetition	2
Make a joke	0
No acknowledgement	213

In Lower (forthcoming), the numbers in Table 4.19 and Table 4.20 did not add up to the total number of responses, which is 126. This is because some responses spanned multiple strategies, for example use of appreciation token

and shifting credit. Rather than create new categories for all one-off instances, I counted one response multiple times in my previous work (Lower, 2019). After further consideration, I brought the coding for compliment responses in line with that for compliments (see 3.5.3): some compliment responses included multiple sub-strategies and responses have been coded to reflect only one strategy and one sub-strategy, in an attempt to focus on the strategy that was the most prominent. This is demonstrated in Example 4.24.

Example 4. 24 Compliment response with multiple sub-strategies

Photo of EM15 on the beach, flanked by two females.

- (01) Male 1: *jajajajjj ese [name] que galan* ('ha ha that [nickname] how handsome')
- (02) Male 2: *todo un sex simbol el man!!!1* ('the guy is a total sex symbol')
- (03) Male 1: *si no.....jajajajajaj bien bien* ('isn't he ha ha ha good good')
- (04) EM15: *qmas mis parceritossss jajajajaja..siii todo un galan ,,gracias..panitas y ...como estan* ('how are you my friends ha ha.. yes completely handsome ,, thanks buddies and ... how are you')

In Example 4.24 EM15 responds to three compliments from two friends using one blanket response (line 04). His first statement, *qmas mis parceritossss jajajajaja..* ('how are you my friends ha ha') is a ritual greeting, and he then goes on to agree with the compliments on his appearance: *siii todo un galan* ('yes completely handsome') and thank the complimenters with *gracias..panitas* ('thanks buddies') before asking Males 1 and 2 how they are. I coded this

compliment response as an agreeing utterance as it seemed to best capture the mood and presumed intention of the compliment response. That said, there is scope to argue that the response sub-strategy here is appreciation token. As I have argued throughout, lines must be drawn and in this instance, I drew the line at agreeing utterance as being the prominent compliment response sub-strategy at use.

Table 4.20 shows further detail of the response strategies used by participants in this study by detailing the sub-strategies used within each category of compliment.

Table 4. 20 Compliment responses according to category of compliment

	Appearance	Possessions	Ability	Personality	Friendship	Children	Pets
Accept	24	5	29	13	2	1	-
Appreciation token	4	-	18	1	-	1	-
Emoticon (w/o comment)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Agreeing utterance	10	3	7	7	-	-	-
Upgrade	8	2	3	4	1	-	-
Downgrade/qualifying utterance	1	-	1	1	-	-	-
Return compliment	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
Reject	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disagreeing utterance	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Challenge sincerity	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deflect/Evade	16	3	17	11	2	1	1
Shift credit	1	-	1	2	-	-	-
Informative comment	3	2	2	5	-	-	-
Ignore	10	-	8	4	2	1	-
Legitimate evasion	2	1	4	-	-	-	1
Request reassurance/repetition	-	-	2	-	-	-	-

Acceptance was generally the preferred response across each category of compliment. Despite the loose consensus of preferred overall strategies, there was considerable variation within sub-strategies of compliment responses. For

example, while acceptance was the preferred strategy of response in both the categories of appearance and ability, the most preferred response sub-strategy with respect to ability was use of an appreciation token (see Example 4.25). This was not the case with compliments on appearance, where the preferred sub-responses were agreeing utterances and upgrading the compliment. The acceptance sub-strategies of appreciation token and agreeing utterance were almost equally popular, with variation between the two relating to the categories of compliment with which they occur.

Compliment responses using the sub-strategy of appreciation token were largely formulaic in that they all used *gracias* ('thanks') as the appreciation token, save one instance, shown in Example 4.25.

Example 4. 25 Compliment response using appreciation token

EM18's photo of a couple dancing, with the caption, *Gran pareja de baile [female name] junto a Male 1* ('Grand dance couple [female name] with Male 1')

Male 1: *Me encantaaa* ('I love it')

EM18: *Q CHEVERE TE GUSTE, YA VOY A SUBIR MAS, ESPERO*

HAYAN LLEGADO BIEN. UN ABRAZO. ('HOW COOL THAT YOU LIKE IT, I'M GOING TO UPLOAD MORE, I HOPE THEY LOAD WELL. A HUG.')

Example 4.25 involves a photo the EM18 took and Male 1, who compliments the photo, is one of the subjects of the photo. Instead of responding to the compliment with *gracias*, EM18 says that he's glad that Male 1 likes the photo. While this is not a classic example of the use of an appreciation token, it fits because EM18's response is an expression of appreciation for Male 1's

compliment. This is the only example of an appreciation token not taking the standard form of *gracias*, and should be viewed as a unique exception, rather than a representation of how appreciation tokens typically occur.

Ignoring a compliment was the most preferred sub-strategy when deflecting or evading a compliment, though other sub-strategies were regularly used as well. The high use of the response strategy of deflect/ignore could also be attributed to the structure of exchanges on FB. One turn from a user can consist of many utterances. It may be the case that instead of ignoring a compliment *per se*, participants were simply responding to another part of the comment: a question, for example.

Surprisingly, out of three responses to compliments on children and pets, two of the three were evasion strategies. This is unexpected because one would not anticipate compliments about those topics to be even remotely face threatening or controversial, nor would accepting them suggest self-praise. Example 4.26 is an example of a compliment response to a compliment on pets that uses the evasion strategy.

Example 4. 26 Evasion when responding to a compliment about pets
EM11's photo of his dog.

Male 1: *q lindo akita loco...donde esta.. ¿??* ('what a pretty akita buddy... where is it.. ???')

EM11: *aqui en quito loco asomaras un dia para que le conozcas*
('here in Quito buddy come by one day so you can meet him')

EM11 evades the compliment by using the sub-strategy of legitimate evasion in answering the question that Male 1 also asked along with his compliment.

4.6.2.1 Compliment upgrades

A sub-strategy of acceptance frequently used by Ecuadorian participants was to upgrade a compliment. This is not a new phenomenon; Herbert (1986:78) included it as a response strategy in his taxonomy ('praise upgrade'), and Maíz-Arévalo (2013:56) observed its use in her FB study of PenSp ('enhance'). It is a known strategy among Spanish men specifically (Lorenzo-Dus, 2001:117), though in response to compliments given by females and used ironically. Herbert (1986) describes the strategy as one in which the speaker accepts the compliment and asserts that the complimentary force is insufficient (p. 78). This idea was only partially present here; in the uses of praise upgrade in the Ecuadorian corpus, the participants did not explicitly accept the compliment, rather simply upgraded it, as shown in Example 4.27.

Example 4. 27 Compliment upgrade

Photo of EM12

Male 1: *vacanes la botas loko... yo tengo unas parecidas...* ('cool boots, man... I have some similar ones...')

EM12: *no... las mias son arms chevres...* ('no, mine are cooler...')

This compliment response is classified as acceptance, along with an upgrade, despite the response clearly stating 'no' and appearing to almost dispute the veracity of the compliment. Example 4.28 is clearer in its implied acceptance that accompanies the compliment upgrade.

Example 4. 28 Compliment upgrade

Photo of EM18 holding a chicken

Male 1: *jajajaja buen buena EM18 jajajaj vamos BOCA* ('ha ha ha, good good EM18 ha ha ha, let's go BOCA')

EM18: *BUENISIMA DIRIA YO, JAJA* ('REALLY GOOD, I'D SAY, HA HA')

While both of these examples demonstrate the use of upgrade as an acceptance strategy, Example 4.28 is clearer both in terms of expressing acceptance and the lighthearted nature of upgrading a compliment through accompanying laughter. On balance, Example 4.27 appears to be an acceptance of the compliment, though in a slightly more combative way than Example 4.28. EM12 does not use any supportive elements in order to soften his disagreement with and upgrade of Male 1's compliment. That said, the two interlocutors, EM12 and Male 1, continue their exchange in a lighthearted, jovial manner, indicating that there was no offense caused by EM12's upgrade of Male 1's compliment, indeed, Male 1's response to EM12's compliment response begins with laughter (jajaja) and addresses EM12 in an affectionate form (*loko*).

The majority of compliment upgrades by Ecuadorian men were made by EM18 (9 out of 18 total), but as the remaining nine were given by five different men, it seems that upgrading a compliment is a common response among young, Ecuadorian men.

4.7 Supportive elements in compliment responses

As with compliments, Ecuadorian men deployed supportive elements in compliment responses on FB. Most of the supportive elements that Ecuadorian men used when complimenting other men were also used when responding to compliments. These include the use of multiple punctuation marks, nominal forms of address, textual alteration, laughter, and 'like'. Emoticons in compliment

responses are conspicuous by their absence, as was the situation with compliments.

Table 4.21 gives an overview of the supportive elements that accompany compliment responses in terms of the overarching compliment response strategies of accept, reject, or deflect.

Table 4. 21 Supportive elements used with written compliment responses

	Accept	Reject	Deflect	Total
Elongation	12	-	6	18
Capital letters	10	-	3	13
Ellipsis marks	26	-	15	41
+Exclamation marks	1	-	1	2
+Question marks	2	-	-	2
Exclamation marks	-	-	2	2
Forms of address	42	1	16	59
Laughter	27	-	26	53
'Like'	36	-	17	53
<i>Besos</i> or <i>abrazos</i>	4	-	-	4
Expressions of love	1	-	-	1
No supportive element	3	-	8	11
Total supportive elements	161	1	86	248

Table 4.21 shows that Ecuadorian men use a variety of supportive elements when responding to compliments, the most preferred being forms of address, laughter, and 'like'. When all iterations of multiple punctuation are combined, the total uses of punctuation come to 47, which is close in frequency to forms of address, laughter, and 'likes'. Displays of affection as supportive elements, such as *besos* ('kisses'), *abrazos* ('hugs'), or expressions of love, were the least preferred methods of supportive elements in compliment responses, but interestingly these were used and emoticons were not used at all.

Due to the potential for pragmatic failure, one would anticipate that when rejecting or deflecting a compliment, recipients might include a supportive element in an attempt to mitigate any face threats that accompany rejections or

evasions. Surprisingly, this was not the case with the Ecuadorian participants: they used supportive elements almost twice as often when accepting a compliment than when evading a compliment. In addition to this, the penultimate row in Table 4.21 shows that some responses were not accompanied by any supportive elements; the majority of these were deflections. The following sections look more closely at the use of supportive elements in compliment responses, focusing on which compliment response strategies used supportive elements most frequently.

4.7.1. *Laughter and 'like'*

Ecuadorian men frequently used 'like' on its own as a response to a compliment (see Table 4.19). That, however, was not the only time that Ecuadorian men used 'like' in compliment responses: they also used 'like' regularly along with a written response to a compliment, making 'like' function as a supportive element in such scenarios. In addition to 'like', Ecuadorian men supplemented written compliment responses with laughter. Table 4.22 details how supportive elements such as 'like' and laughter were used with compliment response strategies and sub-strategies.

Table 4. 22 Supportive elements occurring with written compliment responses

	'Like'	Laughter	'Like' and laughter
Accept	24	15	12
Appreciation token	13	5	2
Agreeing utterance	7	5	3
Upgrade	4	4	6
Downgrade	-	1	1
Return compliment	-	-	-
Emoticon	-	-	-
Reject	-	-	-
Disagreeing utterance	-	-	-
Challenge sincerity	-	-	-

Deflect/Evade	7	16	10
Shift credit	1	2	1
Informative comment	2	2	1
Ignore	2	9	6
Legitimate evasion	2	2	2
Request clarification	-	1	-
Joke	-	-	-
Total	31	31	22

The Ecuadorian participants used these supportive elements in two thirds of their compliment responses and most often in conjunction with accepting a compliment (51 instances). This is not surprising as it fits with modesty expectations of minimizing self-praise. In this way, supportive elements could be viewed as mitigation strategies, an attempt at softening a response while reinforcing friendship and positivity, and an effort to avoid misunderstandings that can plague textual communication. When a participant ‘likes’ a compliment that he ultimately attempts to deflect, the ‘like’ can be viewed as an implicit acceptance while at the same time fulfilling face constraints.

Table 4.22 also demonstrates a preference for one type of supportive element or another, based on whether the participant is accepting or deflecting a compliment. When an Ecuadorian participant accepted a compliment, he was most likely to use ‘like,’ or a combination of ‘like’ and laughter along with the acceptance. However, when an Ecuadorian participant attempted to deflect a compliment, he was more likely to use laughter, or ‘like’ and laughter together, as supportive elements. These tendencies are illustrative of modesty constraints: when a participant ‘likes’ a compliment, he is, in an indirect way, returning the compliment to the complimenter. Likewise, when the participant deflects a compliment, but adds laughter to his response, he attempts to lighten the mood and communicate to the complimenter that the compliment is appreciated,

despite a lack of explicit acceptance. Example 4.29 is one example of a compliment being ignored and using laughter to soften the response.

Example 4. 29 Use of laughter as a supportive element

Photo of EM18 at Machu Picchu

Male 1: *Bin el potoshow jajaja como vas* [EM18 nickname] ('good photo show ha ha how's it going [EM18 nickname]')

EM18: *jaja, bien esa ortografía Male 1, jajaja* ('ha ha, good spelling Male 1, ha ha')

EM18: *todo bien amigo feliz* ('all good happy friend')

If we examine the use of laughter and 'like' in compliment responses vis-à-vis compliment topics, we see that these supportive elements are used most often with the most frequently complimented topics. Table 4.23 shows how 'like' and laughter are used in compliment responses with respect to the topics of compliments.

Table 4. 23 Use of supportive elements vis-à-vis compliment categories

	Appearance	Possessions	Ability	Personality	Friendship	Children	Pets	Total
'Like'	7	1	18	4	-	1	-	31
Laughter	15	-	8	7	1	-	-	31
'Like' and laughter	9	1	7	4	1	-	-	22
Total	31	2	33	15	2	1	-	84

4.7.2 Nominal forms of address and affection

Ecuadorian men used forms of address frequently when responding to compliments. Section 4.5.3 discussed the use of nominal forms of address in

conjunction with compliments. The enthusiasm for using nominal forms of address also carries through to compliment responses. Table 4.24 shows the distribution of nominal forms of address in compliment responses.

Table 4. 24 Address forms co-occurring with compliment responses

Nominal forms of Address	Accept	Deflect	Reject	Total
Names				
Full name	1	1	-	2
First name	5	2	-	7
Friendship term				
<i>Amigo</i> ('friend')	5	1	-	6
<i>Cuate</i> ('friend')	1	-	-	1
<i>Mis parceritossss</i> ('my friends')	1	-	-	1
<i>Pana</i> ('buddy')	9	4	-	13
Family term				
Brother	4	-	-	4
<i>Hermano</i> ('brother')	2	3	-	5
<i>Mijo</i> ('my son')	2	-	-	2
<i>Ñañón</i> ('brother')	1	-	-	1
<i>Primo</i> ('cousin')	1	1	-	2
Descriptive terms				
<i>Colega</i> ('friend')	-	1	-	1
<i>Compadre</i> ('friend')	1	-	-	1
<i>Gordo</i> ('fatty')	2	-	-	2
<i>Guambra</i> ('lad')	1	-	-	1
<i>Loco</i> ('buddy')	2	3	1	6
Man	3	-	-	3
<i>Viejo</i> ('old man')	1	-	-	1
	42	16	1	59

Forms of address were used most in conjunction with acceptances; the most frequently used overall was *pana*. This is similar to the results of the use of nominal forms of address in compliments: *pana* was the second most popular form of address used with compliments, surpassed only by some form of *hermano*.

When responding to compliments, Ecuadorian men used a person's name or a variation of a name as a nominal form of address fairly regularly. This could

occur in order to avoid confusion: photos on FB often have many comments associated with them, and it can be unclear whom a comment is directed towards. The use of a person's name in a response clears up any confusion. On the other hand, Ecuadorian participants also used full names when there were no other comments associated with a photo, as in Example 4.30.

Example 4. 30 Use of full name in compliment response

EM17's photo of a woman with a camera in hand

Male 1: *esta es la foto.!* ('this is the photo.!')

EM17: *Que dice Male 1, ¿cuáles son tus razones e impresiones?*

('What do you mean Male 1, what are your reasons and impressions?')

In Example 4.30, EM17 used Male 1's full name in his response, though not as a tag to the photograph, which would have alerted Male 1 to EM17's response. In his response, EM17 asks Male 1 specifically what he likes about the photo. Everything about this response is unusual: EM17's asking for specific praise, and his use of Male 1's full name in his response when there were no other comments associated with the photograph that could possibly confuse EM17's response. This behavior was rare; the remaining responses that used names as a supportive element related to photos that had multiple comments and the use of a person's name was presumably intended to avoid any confusion as to whom the response was directed towards.

Apart from the use of nominal forms of address in compliment responses, the Ecuadorian participants sometimes used written expressions affection, such as *abrazos* ('hugs'). These forms did not occur frequently, and all occurred along with accepting a compliment, and were not the sole supportive element used in

the responses. All of the instances of *abrazos* were used by EM18, which suggests that this use is personal to this participant.

A final point about the Ecuadorian male use of supportive elements in compliment responses is the absence of emoticons. This is surprising because Ecuadorian men used emoticons to some extent overall (208 instances), but there were no uses of emoticons when responding to compliments from other men. Despite the regular use of emoticons by Ecuadorian men on FB in general, the result of no emoticons in compliment responses mirrors the non-use of emoticons in compliments: as discussed in Section 4.5.5, emoticons were rarely used in compliments.

4.7.3 Textual alteration and repeated punctuation

As with compliments among Ecuadorian men on FB, compliment responses often used various forms of textual alteration and repeated punctuation. The participants regularly deployed capital letters, elongation, and repeated punctuation in their responses to compliments. Similar to compliments, it is not entirely clear whether the use of capital letters can definitely be considered to be a supportive element, as they were often used for an entire comment. If one or two words in a response are capitalized it is more likely that capital letters are being used for emphasis, as in Example 4.31.

Example 4. 31 Use of capitalization as a supportive element

Photo of EM18 sitting on some rocks next to the sea

Male 1: *Vesijue...pareces todo un fantasma del caribe!* ('Son of a bitch.. you look like a phantom of the Caribbean')

EM18: *JAJA, buena Male 1, le atinaste pana, dejate ver un abrazo*

(‘HA HA, good Male 1, you got it buddy, let’s get together a hug’)

Similarly, while there were some instances of repeated exclamation marks used in compliment responses, there were also several examples of multiple question marks, multiple commas, and ellipsis marks. Ellipsis marks appeared with much more frequency than multiple exclamation marks.

On the other hand, given that the use of ellipsis marks occurs so frequently, it could be that this is a feature of male Ecuadorian online communication, particularly because it is also used often in compliments. Additionally, ellipsis marks did not always occur in one specific place in a comment, i.e., always at the end of an utterance, for example. Example 4.32 is an example of the use of ellipsis marks throughout a compliment response.

Example 4. 32 Use of ellipsis marks in a compliment response

Photo of EM13 standing in front of a Christmas tree, holding his daughter, with the caption: *UNA LINDA NAVIDAD CON LA PERSONITA MÁS IMPORTANT D MI VIDA. GRACIAS DIOS X PODER PASAR ESTOS MOMENTOS CON MI BEBA...* (‘A BEAUTIFUL CHRISTMAS WITH THE MOST IMPORTANT LITTLE PERSON IN MY LIFE. THANK GOD FOR BEING ABLE TO PASS THESE MOMENTS WITH MY BABY...’)

Male 1: *se te ve bien en la foto EM13 a los tiempos estas igual qu yo con la chivita que te as dejado jajajajajajajaja* (‘you look good in the photo EM13 it’s been a while you’re like me with how the little one has changed you ha ha’)

EM13: *gracias men...un cambio para I nuevo año men.... Jejejeje...*

(‘thanks man... a change for the new year man... ha haha...’)

Example 4.32 shows the use of ellipsis marks in various places within a compliment response. In this way, this usage replicates spoken words (cf. Yus, 2011) in the way that people often trail off when speaking, and attempting to replicate this phenomenon in online communication may be another effort to keep the communication light and informal, mimicking face to face talk.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has given a thorough review of Ecuadorian male behavior on FB, with respect to compliments, compliment responses, and the supportive elements used in both. The results here show that Ecuadorian men give compliments on a variety of topics, focusing most heavily on ability and appearance, though this can shift when one participant is an outlier in terms of the quantity and types of photographs he has (in this case, EM26). Ecuadorian men favored simple forms of giving compliments, usually comprised of one or two words, and rely on adjectives to convey a positive message.

Ecuadorian men use a variety of supportive elements in both their compliments and compliment responses, including adding extra punctuation, forms of address, textual deformation such as letter elongation or capitalization, laughter, and 'like', found on FB. These supportive elements were so frequently used that they are conspicuous in their absence; a compliment or compliment response without at least one accompanying supportive element stands out as being unusual.

The majority of compliments given to the participants in this study passed without written responses, with the second most common type of compliment response coming in the form 'like', a function unique to FB. Of

compliments that actually did earn a written response from the Ecuadorian male participants, the most common way to respond was to accept the compliment.

In Chapter 5, I give the results for the Spanish participants. As in the current chapter, this includes minimum discussion and analysis of the results. Instead, Chapter 6 is reserved for discussing and comparing and contrasting the two sets of results given in the current chapter and Chapter 5.

Chapter 5

RESULTS: SPAIN

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a full description of the results of the Spanish male participants, following the same format as Chapter 4. This includes the topics of compliments that come up when Spanish men compliment each other on FB (Section 5.2), and the syntactic patterns deployed when making those compliments (Section 5.3). In addition to compliments, I describe responses given by the Spanish male participants to compliments from other Spanish men (Section 5.6). Within these overarching elements of compliments, I will look further into Spanish male compliments and responses by looking into the adjectives used in compliments (Section 5.2), and supportive elements used in conjunction with compliments (Section 5.5) and compliment responses (Section 5.7).

Table 5.1 introduces the Spanish male participants by showing the number of photos that each participant had in the study that received a comment, as well as the total number of comments that each participant's photos received, broken down by males and females. The data is further broken down by the number of photographs that received compliments (fourth column), and finally, the total number of compliments that each Spanish participant received (fifth column), broken down by males and females.

Table 5.1 highlights a few points: first, every participant received a higher number of comments than the number of photos posted, with an average of 3.3 times more comments than photos. This demonstrates that Spanish male

participants in this study enjoyed a relatively high rate of interaction from their FB friends, compared to their output (photos posted, in this case). The second notable point from Table 5.1 is that comments on photos far outnumbered compliments on photos, and fewer photos received compliments than just comments. In contrast to the number of comments received, Spanish men received an average of 1.4 times as many compliments as photographs. For example, SM1 received 43 comments on 9 photographs, and he received 9 compliments on 5 photos. Therefore, while Spanish male participants enjoyed a fairly high rate of interaction overall, they received compliments at a much lower rate than just comments.

Unsurprisingly, Table 5.1 shows that in nearly every instance, Spanish women gave Spanish men more compliments than men gave, and women gave compliments on a wider range of photos than men. The situation with comments, however, was more mixed: men often made more, sometimes many more, comments on the Spanish male participants' photos than did females. Overall, men made more comments on Spanish male participants' photos than females. While men appear less inclined to give compliments to other men on FB, they are not opposed to interacting on FB generally.

Table 5. 1 Overview of Spanish male compliments vs. female compliments

	Total photos w/comments	Total comments		Total photos w/ comps		Total compliments	
		M	F	M	F	M	F
SM1	9	43		5		9	
		31	12	3	4	3	6
SM2	NO PHOTOS						
SM3*	EXCLUDED						
SM4	NO PHOTOS						

SM5	27	66		5		7	
		42	24	1	4	1	6
SM6	23	65		2		2	
		25	40	1	1	1	1
SM7	38	98		4		5	
		51	47	1	4	1	4
SM8	32	83		11		16	
		38	45	4	8	4	12
SM9	NO PHOTOS						
SM10	82	182		10		11	
		156	26	8	2	9	2
SM11	124	364		42		73	
		172	192	20	28	22	51
SM12	3	9		2		3	
		6	3	2	1	2	1
SM13	36	130		17		21	
		94	36	9	9	11	10
SM14	6	25		2		3	
		15	10	0	2	0	3
SM15	35	192		16		40	
		77	115	6	13	9	31
SM16	141	413		36		50	
		206	207	12	29	13	37
SM17	5	25		4		10	
		3	22	0	4	0	10
SM18	5	12		1		1	
		10	2	0	1	0	1
SM19	51	179		33		49	
		64	115	5	30	5	44
SM20	27	105		3		3	
		94	11	1	2	1	2
SM21	23	51		7		8	
		17	34	1	7	1	7
SM22	600	2856		212		319	
		1570	1286	67	177	81	238
SM23	NO PHOTOS						
SM24	1	2		1		1	
		1	1	0	1	0	1
SM25	1	2		1		2	
		1	1	1	1	1	1
SM26	31	81		22		30	
		31	50	3	19	3	27
SM27*	EXCLUDED						
SM28	65	237		28		36	

		142	95	6	24	7	29
SM29	16	84		6		10	
		41	43	0	6	0	10
SM30*	EXCLUDED						
SM31	116	543		23		36	
		389	154	12	12	20	16
SM32	261	810		65		85	
		339	471	6	62	6	79
SM33	2	9		5		5	
		5	4	1	4	1	4
SM34	171	449		50		56	
		180	269	10	42	10	46
TOTAL	1931	7,115		613		891	
		3800	3315	180	497	212	679

*Participant excluded due to being from the wrong location.

5.2 Topics of compliments

With respect to the topics of compliments given among Spanish men, the results are in line with face-to-face studies of compliments, as well as studies of compliments on FB, insofar as the majority of compliments related to appearance (see Chapter 2). Compliments on appearance accounted for 62.8% of the compliments given by men in the Spanish group (see Table 5.2). The second most frequent topic of category was ability, though there were far fewer compliments on ability than appearance (20.6% versus 62.8%). Possessions, children, and pets barely attracted any compliments from Spanish men, and friendship similarly received few comments. The other category that received compliments was personality, but that attracted a small number: 11% of all compliments. What is most interesting about Table 5.2 is that the majority of Spanish participants received compliments in only one category, which was typically appearance. The Spanish participant who received the most compliments (and who coincidentally had the greatest number of photographs in

the study), SM22, received compliments in line with the distribution pattern of the data as the overall: SM22 received the majority of compliments on appearance (69), followed by ability (13), with personality (2), possessions (1), and children (1) trailing far behind. Apart from this participant, and SM11 to some extent, the majority of Spanish male participants received few compliments with few patterns emerging in terms of distribution of compliments across topics. Only SM31 bucked this trend: the majority of compliments that he received related to ability, followed closely by personality. For this participant, compliments on appearance featured less prevalently than those relating to other topics of compliments.

Table 5. 2 Compliments among Spanish men, by category

	Appearance	Possessions	Ability	Personality	Friendship	Child	Pets	Total
SM1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
SM2	QUIT THE STUDY							
SM3	EXCLUDED							
SM4	NO PHOTOS							
SM5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
SM6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
SM7	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
SM8	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	4
SM9	NO PHOTOS							
SM10	4	0	4	0	0	0	1	9
SM11	17	0	3	2	0	0	0	22
SM12	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
SM13	3	0	5	2	1	0	0	11
SM14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SM15	8	0	0	1	0	0	0	9
SM16	6	0	5	1	1	0	0	13
SM17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SM18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SM19	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	5
SM20	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
SM21	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
SM22	64	1	14	1	0	1	0	81
SM23	NO PHOTOS							
SM24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SM25	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1

SM26	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
SM27	EXCLUDED							
SM28	3	0	1	3	0	0	0	7
SM29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SM30	EXCLUDED							
SM31	4	0	8	7	0	1	0	20
SM32	3	1	1	0	1	0	0	6
SM33	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
SM34	6	0	4	0	0	0	0	10
	134	2	48	19	6	2	1	212
	63.2%	.9%	22.6%	9%	2.8%	.9%	.5%	

Table 5.2 shows that among Spanish men, compliments on appearance occur most frequently. The following sections discuss each topic of compliment individually, with particular focus of lexical elements, specifically, adjectives, occurring in compliments. Discussion begins with a broad overview of lexical elements in Spanish male compliments.

5.2.1 Lexical elements in topics of compliments

The majority of compliments (116, or 55%) given to Spanish men by other men relied on the use of an adjective to convey a positive message. Table 5.3 lists the adjectives used compliments in relation to the compliment topic.

Table 5. 3 Adjectives used in Spanish compliments

	Appearance	Possessions	Ability	Personality	Friendship	Kids	Pets	Total
<i>Artístico</i> ('artistic')	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Bella</i> ('pretty')	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
<i>Bonito</i> ('pretty')	7	-	4	-	-	-	-	11
<i>Brutal</i> ('brutal')	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Bueno</i> ('good')	11	-	8	1	-	1	1	22
<i>Chulo</i> ('cool')	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	4
<i>Elegante</i> ('elegant')	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Enorme</i> ('enormous')	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	3
<i>Fantástica</i> ('fantastic')	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1

<i>Genial</i> ('good')	1	-	2	1	-	-	-	4
<i>Grande</i> ('grand')	1	-	3	-	-	-	-	4
<i>Guapo</i> ('handsome')	43	-	-	-	-	-	-	43
<i>Hermoso</i> ('pretty')	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Impresionante</i> ('amazing')	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	2
<i>Lindo</i> ('pretty')	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
<i>Maravilla</i> ('wonderful')	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
<i>Mono</i> ('cute')	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
<i>Morenito</i> ('tanned guy')	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Orgásmico</i> ('orgasmic')	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Precioso</i> ('precious')	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
<i>Putá hostia</i> ('bloody amazing')	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
<i>Riquísimo</i> ('delicious')	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Sexy</i> ('sexy')	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
<i>Sublime</i> ('sublime')	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Terrible</i> ('terrible')	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Total	77	-	30	6	1	1	1	116

The most commonly occurring adjective was *guapo*, followed by the fairly generic *bueno*. Compliments relying on *guapo* as the adjective of choice only related to appearance, unsurprisingly. Compliments deploying *bueno*, on the other hand, spanned the entire spectrum of compliment topics, save for those relating to possessions (see Section 5.2.3). Example 5.1 illustrates the use of *bueno* across compliment topics.

Example 5. 1 Use of *bueno* in different compliment topics

- (a) Appearance (photo of SM1 dressed up in a costume):

Male 1: *Que foto mas buena jajaja* ('what a good photo ha ha ha)

- (b) Ability (edited photo of SM16 showing his face from different angles:

Male 1: *jajajaj k foto mas wena* ('ha ha ha what a good photo')

- (c) Personality (photo of SM28 with a local politician):

Male 1: jejejeje mu guena SM28, haciendo amigos cuando dejan el cargo ('ha ha ha ha very good SM28, making friends when they leave office')

- (d) Friendship (photo of SM32 with friends in a Roman amphitheater with comment by SM32 about what a great trip it was)

Male 1: *Gracias a ti porque eres una de las personas mas bellas y buenas que hay en este grupo un abrazo* ('thanks to you because you are one of the most beautiful and good people in this group a hug')

- (e) Children (photo of SM22 with his toddler nephew):

Male 1: *qué buenos pellizcos le pegaba yo a esos mofletillos!* ('what good nibbles I'd give those chubby little cheeks!')

- (f) Pets (photo of SM10 with his dog)

Male 1: *Que caña de perro! Esa foto es muy buena se lo ve con cara de bueno.* ('What a great dog! This photo is very good he has the face of a good one.')

Example 5.1 demonstrates that when analyzing compliments, context is key: the compliments for appearance and ability are identical (except for spelling and where the laughter is placed), yet they pertain to two different topics. Viewing these compliments in isolation, i.e., without the accompanying photograph and any commentary or captions, makes assigning meaning difficult. If one views the compliment of friendship on its own, without the photo and the comment from SM32, the compliment looks more like it has to do with SM32's appearance, which does not seem to be the case. Similarly, the compliment regarding SM22's nephew is not obviously a compliment directed at a child;

hearing it in isolation, it may sound a bit strange that it is directed at an adult, but not necessarily inappropriate.

Another interesting point illustrated in Example 5.1 is that compliments can be similar or almost identical, regardless of the person making them, and the object of the compliment. This suggests that within this group of Spanish men, compliments are relatively formulaic. This point is explored thoroughly throughout this chapter, but the briefest glimpse of compliments given by Spanish men suggests some degree of formulaicity.

Half of the adjectives used by Spanish men were only used once (Table 5.3). Of the adjectives that were only used once, the majority of those did not relate to compliments about appearance. This may suggest that compliments on topics besides appearance spark more creativity on the part of the complimentor, evidenced by the use of a wider range of adjectives to convey a positive message.

There were few examples in the Spanish corpus of the use of mock impoliteness by way of adjectives and adjectival phrases: *terrible* and *puta hostia* (see Mugford and Montes, 2020, and Chapter 4.2). Example 5.2 shows mock impoliteness used in context.

Example 5. 2 Use of mock impoliteness in compliments

- (a) Photo of trees in autumn colors

Male 1: *fotaza terrible* ('amazing awful photo')

- (b) Photo of SM16 making a funny face

Male 1: *jajajajajajaja la puta hostia d foto!!!!* ('bloody amazing photo!!!!')

Example 5.2 demonstrates how a negative adjective, and an unpleasant expression (when taken literally) can be used in compliments among friends. The first, which uses *terrible*, is an interesting juxtaposition of a negative adjective used alongside a noun with an augmentative that functions to add emphasis to a noun, or, as the case with this example, making the noun into a compliment in itself: *fotazo* ('amazing photo'). This point is also discussed in Section 5.5.2.

Spanish men used *guapo* most frequently when complimenting appearance. This adjective accounted for 37% of all adjective use, and nearly half of adjectives deployed in complimenting appearance used the word *guapo*. This heavy reliance on one-word points to a high degree of standardization in male-male compliments on appearance among young Spaniards.

5.2.2 Appearance

The majority of compliments given to Spanish men related to appearance, and were relatively straightforward, with little variation in expression. As discussed above, the majority of compliments on appearance were accomplished via adjective (55%), and most of those used the same adjective: *guapo* ('handsome') (32% of all compliments on appearance). There was some variation in the use of the word *guapo*, including alternative spellings (*wapo*, *uapo*), elongation (*guapoooo*), augmentatives (*guapetón*), and diminutives (*guapito*). Apart from *guapo*, Spanish men relied on the adjectives *bien*, *bueno* ('good'), and *bonito* ('pretty') to convey compliments on appearance (see Table 5.3).

As shown in Table 5.2 most of the Spanish men who participated in this study received at least one compliment on appearance (70%), but the majority of compliments on appearance by men overall were directed at SM22, who received 65 out of the 134 (48.5%) total compliments on appearance, from several different men. SM11 also received a number of compliments on appearance, but the majority (14/16) were from only one other man, which tended to be more fully realized, rather than basic and formulaic, such as *qué guapo* ('how handsome'), for example. Some examples of such compliments directed towards SM11 are listed in Example 5.3.

Example 5. 3 Compliments on appearance from Male 1 to SM11

- (a) *Esta sí es una foto de modelo!!* ('This is a modelling photo!!')
- (b) *De aquí al modelaje!!!* ('From here to modelling')
- (c) *Hey hey!!! qué guardaditas te tenías estas fotos!!! Te ves muy guapo :) Un abrazo* ('Hey hey!!! How well hidden you had these photos!!! You look very handsome :) A hug')

The compliments in Example 5.3, while less formulaic than the standard *qué guapo*, are still fairly straightforward. There were other examples in the Spanish corpus that were more creative and less direct, but which still managed to convey a positive evaluation of the participant's appearance. Example 5.4 shows a few of these. Implicit compliments are discussed more fully in section 5.4.

Example 5. 4 Creative compliments on appearance

- (a) *oyoyoyoyoyoy!* ('wowwowwow!')
- (b) *Ay, ayyyyy <3* ('Wow, wow')

Most of the examples in 5.4 are different types of interjection, used in order to convey a compliment. While using an interjection is itself straightforward and formulaic, Example 5.4 shows that there is a lot of potential for creativity when formulating this type of compliment. Nearly 20% of all compliments on appearance were implicit compliments, which suggests that while the preferred method of complimenting appearance between Spanish males is via more basic, formulaic methods, there are some interesting strategies used. This is explored in more detail in Section 5.4.

In addition to the variations on appearance compliments discussed already, a few additional themes arose within compliments on appearance: modelling and likening the complimentee to food. Although by no means a majority of appearance compliments (ten examples out of 133 total compliments on appearance), compliments likening a recipient to a model occurred frequently, both explicitly and implicitly. Examples of this are given in Example 5.5.

Example 5. 5 Compliment recipients compared to a model

- (a) *to puesto el modelazo!* ('all dressed up like a model')
- (b) *... y la portada de su nuevo album "Come back to me" ahora disponible sólo en Spotify premium* ('...and the cover of his new album "Come back to me" now available only on Spotify premium')

The Example 5.5(a) is clear: the recipient of the compliment looks great and is likened to a model, models typically being held as exceptionally physically attractive, therefore the compliment recipient is more attractive than most, by extension. The Example 5.5(b) is less explicit: it likens the photo and the

participant to that of an album cover, which is something often thought of as beautiful or artistic. While not exactly a reference to modelling, it is an oblique allusion to a higher standard of beauty.

The other theme in appearance compliments, likening the recipient to food, occurred only four times, but these four examples offered three different methods of using food or eating as a means of realizing a compliment on appearance. These are listed in Example 5.6.

Example 5. 6 Compliment recipients as food

- (a) *estás pa comerte* ('you are good enough to eat')
- (b) *Te como!* ('I eat you!')
- (c) *ñam ñam* ('yum yum')

Although these examples by no means make up the majority of appearance compliments directed towards Spanish men, they occur frequently enough to note the tendency, however small, to express compliments in this way, which could indicate an emerging pattern that would be more visible with a larger sample.

5.2.3 Possessions

Possessions were not a heavily favored topic of compliment among young Spanish men on FB. There were only two compliments on possessions in the entire corpus, both reproduced in Example 5.7.

Example 5. 7 Compliments on possessions

- (a) Photo of SM22 with the caption, "I'm boooooored"

Male 1: *me gusta la camiseta!* ('I like the t-shirt!')

SM22: *sii, verdad?* ('Yes, right?')

- (b) Photo of SM32's bedroom during his Erasmus year with the caption, "*Mi habitación polaca.*" ('My Polish bedroom')

Male 1: *Me encanta que tengas así puesto el escritorio. Me encanta tu habitación!* ('I love how you put the desk there. I love your room!')

The first of these two compliments on appearance is particularly interesting, because it could be given with respect to practically any person in any photograph. There is nothing obviously remarkable about the t-shirt; it is a short sleeved, white t-shirt, with what looks like an imprint of the British union flag on it, with perhaps some words, but those are not clearly visible in the photograph. We may guess that Male 1 gave the t-shirt to SM22, or perhaps the t-shirt actually belongs to Male 1, though there is nothing further in the conversation to indicate this. The conversation continues between SM22 and Male 1, and takes a flirtatious turn, reproduced in Example 5.8.

Example 5. 8 Compliment on possessions turned to flirtation

Photo of SM22 with the caption, "I'm boooooored"

- (01) Male 1: *me gusta la camiseta!* ('I like the t-shirt!')
- (02) SM22: *sii, verdad?* ('Yes, right?')
- (03) Male 1: *jeje pero el modelo.. no sé yo si me convence :P* ('ha ha but the model.. I do not know if it convinces me :P')
- (04) SM22: *:O pues mejor que ése, no lo vas a encontrar! :P* (':O well you will not find a better one than this one! :P')
- (05) Male 1: *jajajajaja no sé no sé, tenéis a uno un poco mas alto? :P* ('ha ha I don't know I don't know, is there one a little taller? :P')

- (06) SM22: *lo que a este le falta de alto, le sobra por otro lado ;)*
 ('what this one lacks in height, he makes up for on the other side ;)')
- (07) Male 1: *oioioioi dime de que presumes... :P* ('oooh, tell me what you mean... :P')
- (08) SM22: *ya... pues una vez que lo pruebas, no lo sueltas! XD*
 ('well, one you try it , you never let it go! XD')
- (09) Male 1: *:O y eso quien lo dice? :P* (':O who says this? :P')
- (10) SM22: *todos xD* ('everybody xD')
- (11) Male 1: *y como e k ellos lo han soltado? :O* ('and why have they left it? :O')

The exchange between SM22 and Male 1 brings up many questions about compliments, and the motivations for giving them. Was Male 1's compliment (line 01) simply a mechanism to strike up a flirtatious conversation with SM22, or was it a happy accident that the conversation took this turn? The exchange in its entirety calls the sincerity of the original compliment into question to some extent. As stated above, this generic compliment on clothing could be given by anybody, to anybody. The way this particular compliment thread turned was not how generic compliments typically play out, regardless of the topic of compliment. Indeed, the other compliment on possessions in the Spanish corpus did not remotely resemble this one, though it could have, easily, as a bed is featured prominently in the photo.

What these two compliments on possessions best demonstrate is that compliments can perform multiple functions, including an opening for flirtations or to further conversation. Compliments can also function as a positive and

supportive message with no ulterior motive. The compliments on possessions in the Spanish corpus do not convey that Spanish men are particularly interested in t-shirts or dormitory rooms. There does not seem to be any greater meaning here in terms of the particular items complimented. The small number of compliments on possessions may suggest, however, that Spanish men do not place a great deal of importance on each other's possessions, or at least they do not feel them important enough to mention on FB. More data would aid in understanding whether this is a wider trend for compliments among Spanish men.

5.2.4 Ability

Spanish men gave each other a number of compliments on ability; ability was the second most common topic of compliment within this group. Most of the compliments on ability pertained to a participant's photographic skills. Examples of this type of compliment are listed in Example 5.9.

Example 5. 9 Compliments on Spanish participants' photography skills

- (a) *que foto más bonita!* ('what a pretty photo!')
- (b) *Me gustan tela. La calidad es muy buena!! Las hiciste con tu móvil??* ('I like them so much. The quality is very good!! Did you take them with your mobile??')

Many of the compliments on ability received by Spanish men were similar to those in Example 5.9, and typically were given in relation to photos of landscapes. One very interesting compliment on ability came up, shown in Example 5.10.

Example 5. 10 Implicit compliment on ability

SM22's photograph of a Pride parade, no particular people are discernible from the photo

Male 1: *me etikito vale!! me gusta!!* ('tag me ok!! I like it!!')

I view the compliment in Example 5.10 as an implicit compliment on SM22's photography skills, given how his friend likes the photo enough that he has requested that SM22 'tag' him in the photo, which will lead to Male 1's FB friends seeing SM22's photos. The second part of the compliment is more explicit in its level of praise: *me gusta!!* ('I like it!!'), though it is unknown what is the 'it' that Male 1 likes: the photo, SM22's personality, the event itself, or perhaps Male 1's friendship with SM22. Example 5.10 demonstrates that while compliments pertaining to photography skills are often formulaic, there is some room for more indirect forms of compliments.

Other compliments on ability related to cooking skills (4), academic achievements (6), artistic skills (15), musical ability (2), and work success (2). Although the majority of compliments on ability focused on photography skills (20), the variety of topics remarked upon by other men suggests that Spanish men recognize and appreciate their male friends' various abilities.

As was the case with compliments on appearance, the majority (63%) of compliments on ability were realized via adjectives. The most favored adjective *bueno* ('good'), followed by *bonito* ('pretty'). Given that the majority of compliments on ability pertained to photographic skills, this is not too surprising: *bonito* is a generic adjective that is imminently suited to compliments on scenery, and as Table 5.4 shows, *bonito* was in fact the most common adjective used in compliments on photography skills. *Bueno*, in contrast, was

used across a variety of compliments on ability, which further demonstrates that *bueno* is a widely applicable and basic adjective.

Table 5. 4 Comparison of compliments on ability and adjectives used

Adjective	Photography	Artistic skills	Academic achievements	Cooking skills	Musical ability	Work success	Sports	Total
<i>Bonito</i> ('pretty')	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
<i>Bueno</i> ('good')	2	3	1	-	-	1	1	8
<i>Chula</i> ('cool')	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
<i>Enorme</i> ('enormous')	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Fantástico</i> ('fantastic')	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Genial</i> ('good')	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
<i>Grande</i> ('grand')	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	3
<i>Impresionante</i> ('amazing')	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Maravilla</i> ('wonderful')	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
<i>Orgásmico</i> ('orgasmic')	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
<i>Precioso</i> ('precious')	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
<i>Riquísimo</i> ('delicious')	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
<i>Sublime</i> ('sublime')	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Terrible</i> ('terrible')	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	14	11	1	2	0	1	1	30

Compliments on ability given to Spanish men in this sample were given on a variety of topics. Nevertheless, given how nearly half of all compliments on ability pertained to photography skills, it can be said that these compliments retain a fairly high degree of formulaicity in terms of what skill or ability is selected for compliments on FB. This may be a limitation of FB however, rather than limited creativity on the part of Spanish men.

5.2.5 Personality

Spanish male participants received relatively few compliments on personality (19), in comparison to compliments on appearance (138) and ability (49). Despite this, personality compliments were interesting because there was

not a clear pattern that emerged in terms of which aspects of a participant's personality received compliments. Additionally, while in the topics of appearance and ability, one participant, SM22, received the majority of compliments, a different participant, SM31, received the majority of compliments on personality. This participant (SM31) had a wide variety of photographs in the study, self-photos, photos of his drawings, photos of himself with friends or family, and everything in between. One photo that attracted two compliments on personality is reproduced in Example 5.11.

Example 5. 11 Compliments on personality

παπαῖ (not παπαί, Hdn.Gr. 2.933), exclam. of suffering, whether mental, as A.*Pers.* 1031, or (more freq.) physical, Ar.*Ach.* 1214, etc.; doubled, A. l. c., Ag. 1114; φεῦ παπαῖ, παπαῖ μάλ' αἰθίς S.*Ph.* 792; also παππαπαπαπαῖ ib. 754; παπαῖ, ἀπαπαπαῖ, παπᾶ παπᾶ παπᾶ παπαῖ ib. 746. II. of surprise, Hdt. 8.26; π., οἷον λέγεις you don't say so I, Pl.*Lg.* 704c; also παπαπαπαῖ Ar.*Th.* 1191; c. gen., παπαῖ τῶν ἐπαίνων Luc.*Cont.* 23; expressing scorn, S.*Fr.* 153. παπαϊάξ, Com. exaggeration of παπαῖ, ἀπαπαῖ παπαϊάξ Ar.*V.* 235, cf. Luc.*Fug.* 33. II. exclam. of surprise, E.*Cyc.* 153, Ar.*Lys.* 924.

SM31: *Para la futura serie filologoide, si alguna vez tengo que sufrir, sufriré en griego.* ('For the future philological series, if I ever need to suffer, I'll suffer in Greek.')

Male 1: *Qué me encanta xD* ('How I love it xD')

Male 2: *cómo mola* ('how cool')

The photo in Example 5.11 posted by SM31 is an unusual one for a young Spanish man to post on FB. The photo appears to be an extract from Greek-English dictionary, and SM31's caption seems to pertain to the Greek method of expressing suffering. Two of SM31's male friends comment, expressing how they

like the photo, and presumably, SM31's accompanying comment. This dictionary entry was not written by SM31, he has only reproduced it. The comments can therefore only be compliments on SM31's sense of humor in posting the dictionary entry and insisting that he will be 'suffering in Greek' from now on.

Other compliments on Spanish men's personalities involved use of a noun phrase to give the man a label. Example 5.12 shows some samples of this type of personality compliment.

Example 5. 12 Use of noun phrases to compliment personality

(a) *ke artistas los dos* ('what artists the two')

(b) *Tres grandes* ('Three grand (men)')

The examples given in Example 5.12 are the closest thing to a pattern that emerges in the Spanish corpus for compliments on personality. The types of photos that attract compliments on personality are not at all predictable. For example, SM28 posted many memes, photos of clips from television shows, and public signage. One of his photos from a television show received the following comment, which I classified as a compliment on SM28's personality.

Example 5. 13 Compliment on personality

SM28's photo of a woman with crazy hair pointing a gun, with the caption, "*Qué grandeee*" ('How great')

Male 1: *Dios, me encanta esta escena!!!!* ('God, I love that scene!!!!')

This is a compliment on SM28's personality because it is essentially agreeing with SM28's taste in films. SM28 posted a photo from a scene in a movie that he likes, and his friend agreed that it is a good scene by exclaiming how he likes the scene as well. That said, despite SM28 posting many photos of this type, this is

the only compliment that he received on one of these that related to his personality.

The low degree of predictability in compliments on personality makes them a bit difficult to spot, and to interpret. That said, these compliments tended to be unique and lent themselves to more creativity in how they were expressed. I will discuss this in greater detail in Section 5.4.

5.2.6 Friendship

Compliments on friendship were straightforward and easy to spot in the Spanish corpus, but there were very few overall (6). These compliments were spread across users: no single participant received more than one compliment on friendship. That said, one form of compliment on friendship came up twice, given by different men, and pertaining to different men. These are given in Example 5.14.

Example 5. 14 Compliments on friendship

- (a) SM25's photo of himself and three friends on a roller coaster

Male 1: *uiii jajja que bien no lo pasamos* ('ha ha how well we passed this')

- (b) SM16's photo of himself with three friends at a party

Male 2: *jajaja vaya personajes XD...k bien nos lo pasamos eehh!!! :D* ('ha what characters XD... how well we passed this huh!!! :D')

It is interesting to highlight how this form (*que bien nos lo pasamos*) surfaces with respect to compliments on friendship and is used by different, unrelated, people within this study, suggesting a formulaic approach to

compliments on friendship among young Spanish men. Additionally, the phrasing of the compliment suggests a feeling of nostalgia for occasions spent together, as seen in the Ecuadorian corpus (see Chapter 4.2.6).

The fact that Spanish men here received few compliments on friendship does not prove conclusively that Spanish men do not value their friendships with other men. As ever, there are multiple factors at play, including the types of photographs that the Spanish men posted on their FB profiles. There may not have been many photos of groups of friends, which makes it less likely that there will be many compliments on friendship. The nature of a photo can sometimes predict the type of comment or compliment that ensues, and a photo of a man on his own is not likely to receive a compliment on friendship from another man. That is certainly the case among Spanish men: only one compliment on friendship was given on a photo of a man on his own, every other friendship compliment came about with photos of groups of people.

5.2.7 Children and pets

None of the Spanish male participants appeared to have children of their own. Two participants, SM22 and SM31, posted photos of their nephew and niece, respectively, on their FB profiles. These photos attracted two compliments from men. There were also very few photos of participants' pets, and even fewer compliments relating to pets.

SM22 received only one compliment relating to his nephew, which is surprising because SM22 received many compliments on his appearance from other men (69 total), and some of these were flirtatious in nature, as demonstrated by Example 5.8. I expected there to be more compliments on

SM22's nephew, perhaps as a way to strike up conversation. That said, there were a few compliments on photos of SM22 pictured with his nephew. I counted these as compliments relating to SM22's appearance, rather than a compliment on the nephew's appearance. Perhaps Spanish men feel unable to compliment on a child who is merely related to a friend. It would be interesting to see whether the situation is different if the children were those of the participants, but that is not possible in this study. The only conclusion to be drawn from the data here is that despite the presence of photos of children, Spanish men in this study were not inclined to give many compliments to the children.

The Spanish corpus has shown that they prefer to compliment each other on appearance more often than any other topic. Compliments on appearance here are generally straightforward, and sometimes consisted of male-male flirtation. Spanish men also complimented each other on ability (primarily photographic capabilities), personality, and friendship. The data here showed that Spanish men rarely compliment each other on their pets or children that are related to them. The next section focuses on the syntactic patterns of compliments favored by Spanish men in this study.

5.3 Syntactic patterns of compliments

Spanish men demonstrated a tendency to rely on adjectives to convey a positive message (see Section 5.1), and often rely on an adjective alone to express a compliment. Table 5.5 shows the frequency of each compliment pattern (see Chapter 3.5.3 for a discussion of compliment syntactic patterns used in this study).

Table 5. 5 Frequency of each compliment syntactic pattern

Syntactic pattern	Code	Occurrences
(NP) + V(+Intens) + ADJ/ADV	A	3 (1.4%)
V (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV (+NP)	B	18 (8.5%)
V (+NP) (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV	C	3 (1.4%)
(Interj) + (qué) + ADJ/ADV (+Poss + NP)	D	4 (1.9%)
(Interj) + (qué) + ADJ/ADV (+que + V)	E	10 (4.7%)
Qué (+ADJ) + NP (+que + V)	F	13 (6.1%)
(Intens) + ADJ/ADV	G	38 (17.9%)
Cómo + V	H	2 (.9%)
NP + gustar/fascinar/encantar	I	21 (10%)
Implicit compliment	J	37 (17.5%)
NP	L	7 (3.3%)
Qué + NP + tan/más + ADJ	O	5 (2.4%)
NP + ADJ/ADV	P	8 (3.8%)
Other	Q	12 (5.7%)
Qué + ADJ/ADV	R	21 (10%)
ADJ/ADV + NP	S	7 (3.3%)
Tan...como	T	0
ADJ/ADV + V (+NP)	U	0
V + NP	V	3 (1.4%)

As expected, Spanish men used categories G and R frequently, the two categories that rely entirely on an adjective to convey a positive message. Perhaps surprisingly, category J, implicit compliment, was also used regularly, as often as G, in fact. This category is discussed in more detail in Section 5.4.

Categories A-C are very similar that it was often difficult and slightly arbitrary assigning one syntactic pattern to the compliment. Example 5.15 shows examples of compliments from each syntactic pattern, A-C.

Example 5. 15 Classifying compliments in syntactic patterns A-C

(a) Pattern A

Esta foto es genial xD ('This photo is great xD')

(b) Pattern B

E mu grande ('It is very grand')

(c) Pattern C

Eres un tío genial ('You are a great uncle¹¹)

The compliments in Example 5.15 are straightforward: each compliment in each syntactic pattern has the required elements and fits into the given category. However, questions arise as to why the compliment classified above as pattern B (*E mu grande*), is best classified as B, rather than A, or even C. In pattern A, the noun phrase at the beginning is not a necessary element of the pattern, but optional. In this data, I have tried to code consistently. Any compliment assigned to syntactic pattern A has a noun phrase at the beginning of the compliment, any compliment placed into pattern B does not have a noun phrase at the beginning of the sentence, and so on.

A further difficulty arose with respect to Categories A-C: the complete absence of an adjective or adverb. Example 5.16 shows some examples of compliments that contained a verb, a noun phrase, but no adjective or adverb.

Example 5. 16 Compliments without adjectives or adverbs

(a) *eres una maquina* ('you are a machine')

(b) *Estamos follapavxs* ('We are fuckable guys')

I initially classified the syntactic patterns displayed in Example 5.16 as Category B, but was not completely satisfied with this. Patterns A-C appear to require an adjective or adverb, and these compliments do not contain one, though this is arguable with respect to "*Estamos follapavxs*", as it is a noun (*pavxs*), modified however incorrectly (*folla*). Compliments of this type do not fit within Category U either, as that also requires an adjective. Though there were only three examples of compliments of this form, I thought it necessary and reasonable to create a

¹¹ This photo depicts the participant with his niece, therefore *tío* in this context likely means 'uncle'.

new category: V: V+NP. Some existing categories contained three or fewer compliments (see Table 5.5), and I prefer a new category rather than filling up the ‘Other’ category (Q), as it communicates very little about the structure of Spanish male compliments.

Spanish men used Category I frequently. That said, the majority of instances in the Spanish corpus did not follow the pattern exactly as given in prior research (cf. Placencia and Yépez Lasso, 1999, and Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez, 2013). Example 5.17 shows some samples of compliments classified as syntactic pattern I.

Example 5. 17 Compliments using syntactic pattern I

- (a) *me encanta* (‘I love [it]’)
- (b) *me gusta mucho!* (‘I like [it] a lot!’)

Neither of the examples in Example 5.17 contains a noun phrase; the positive message in the compliment is expressed by the verb (see Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez, 2013:113). With respect to the current study, *me gusta* often appears on its own as a comment on the photo, thus the thing being liked is the photo, and the exact ‘thing’ being liked is left open to some interpretation. Within the Spanish corpus, there was a slight preference for *encantar*: 11 out of the 21 occurrences of pattern I used *encantar*, rather than *gustar*. There were no examples of Spanish men using *fascinar*. There was, however, an indication that *encantar* carries more weight than *gustar*, as the compliment in Example 5.18, indicates.

Example 5. 18 Use of *encantar* and *gustar*

Photo of SM22 and Male 1 at a Pride parade

Male 1: *No es que me guste, es que me encantaaa xD* ('I don't like it, I love it xD')

SM22: *a mi tb! Salimos muy bien!! :P* ('me too! We look very good!! :P')

Example 5.18 demonstrates that, for the Spanish man in Example 5.18 at least, expressing one's love for something (*me encanta*) is more valuable, perhaps both in terms of strength of compliment, and for how the compliment is received by the recipient. In Example 5.18, Male 1's love of the photo (what, precisely, is being loved is of course ambiguous) gives SM22 an opening to comment on both his own appearance and to give a compliment to Male 1 on his appearance.

In Table 5.6 I group the syntactic patterns from Table 5.5 in order to discern whether one pattern clearly stands out when the information is organized in a different manner (as in Chapter 4). Table 5.5 showed that the most common form of compliment used by Spanish men was pattern G, occurring in 17% of compliments. When this pattern is combined with two similar patterns as shown in Table 5.6, compliment patterns relying on an adjective to relay a positive message make up 23.6% of compliments given by Spanish men. Implicit compliments remain as the second most popular syntactic form of compliment after re-arranging syntactic patterns. Pattern R is the third most popular pattern in Table 5.5, but slips to fourth when the patterns are combined, though only just. Grouping the following patterns and counting them as one seems sensible; separating them and ranking them individually does little to shed light on how young Spanish men compliment each other.

(NP) + V (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV

V (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV (+NP)

V (+NP) (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV

Table 5. 6 Syntactic patterns, rearranged

Syntactic pattern	Occurences
(Intens) + ADJ/ADV (Interj) + (qué) + ADJ/ADV (+Poss + NP) (Interj) + (qué) + ADJ/ADV (+que + V)	52 (24.5%)
Implicit compliment	37 (17.5%)
(NP) + V (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV V (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV (+NP) V (+NP) (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV ADJ + V (+NP)	24 (11.3%)
Qué + ADJ/ADV	21 (10%)
NP + <u>gustar/fascinar/encantar</u>	21 (10%)
NP + ADJ/ADV ADJ/ADV + NP	15 (7.1%)
Other	12 (5.7%)
Qué (+ADJ) + NP (+que + V)	13 (6.1%)
NP	7 (3.3%)
Qué + NP + tan/más + ADJ	5 (2.4%)
V + NP	3 (1.4%)
Cómo + V	2 (.9%)

Data can often be arranged to suit a given point of view, but that is not what I am attempting to do here. The aim of rearranging and presenting the compliment patterns in slightly different configurations is attempts to show which elements Spanish men most heavily rely upon when complimenting each other. A bit more than half (117 of 212) of the syntactic patterns used by Spanish men when complimenting another Spanish man featured an adjective as a critical part of the expression. This demonstrates a tendency by Spanish men to rely upon adjectives to make positive evaluations of each other. This is not formulaic behavior *per se*, but rather an indication of a trend in behavior.

5.3.1 Syntactic patterns and compliment topics

Viewing the data on the use of syntactic patterns in relation to the topics of compliments sheds a different light on the syntactic patterns that Spanish men deploy to give compliments to other men on FB. For example, are compliments on appearance more likely to rely on a syntactic form that conveys the bulk of its message via an adjective? Table 5.7 shows how each syntactic pattern relates to each category of compliment.

Table 5. 7 Syntactic patterns and topics of compliments

	Appearance	Possessions	Ability	Personality	Friendship	Children	Pets	Total
A	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	3
B	13	-	4	1	-	-	-	18
C	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	3
D	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	4
E	9	-	-	-	1	-	-	10
F	4	-	2	2	2	2	1	13
G	26	-	9	3	-	-	-	38
H	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2
I	11	2	5	3	-	-	-	21
J	28	-	5	3	1	-	-	37
L	3	-	2	2	-	-	-	7
O	2	-	3	-	-	-	-	5
P	4	-	4	-	-	-	-	8
Q	7	-	4	-	1	-	-	12
R	17	-	4	-	-	-	-	21
S	4	-	2	1	-	-	-	7
V	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	3
Total	134	2	48	19	6	2	1	212

Unsurprisingly, one of the most often used syntactic patterns for giving compliments on appearance was pattern G, which was the most frequently used syntactic pattern overall, along with J. Pattern J, which is an implicit compliment, is the most frequently used syntactic pattern for compliments on appearance.

This result is rather surprising given that implicit compliments are considered to be more thoughtful and require more effort certainly than one composed of solely and adjective. Implicit compliments in the Spanish corpus are discussed fully in Section 5.4.

Although there were only two compliments on possessions in the Spanish corpus (see Section 5.2.3 for these examples), it is noteworthy that both of these compliments followed Pattern I, indicating that there may be a prescribed way of expressing admiration for another man's possessions. Unfortunately, there are not enough examples of compliments on possessions in the Spanish corpus; more investigation is required on this point in order to draw firmer conclusions.

Appearance was the most frequently given topic of compliment among young Spanish men, but these compliments were realized by a large variety of syntactic patterns. The situation is similar for compliments on ability and personality, and, to some extent, compliments on friendship. Syntactic patterns G and J were favored most heavily by Spanish men overall, but these patterns were not the clear favorites in compliments on personality or friendship. The data demonstrates that Spanish men favored some syntactic forms of compliments over others, but they did not display a clear preference for only a few syntactic patterns above all others, preferring to use a variety of patterns. This result shows both creativity in terms of electing implicit compliments as the syntactic pattern of choice in giving compliments, as well as using a wide range of syntactic patterns, and it simultaneously shows a tendency to formulaicity in that compliments relying on adjectives were also heavily favored.

5.4 Implicit compliments

Spanish men gave many implicit compliments. Such compliments are generally regarded as being quite creative, requiring more thought than a standard, formulaic, compliment on the part of the complimenter, as well as inferencing on the part of the recipient (see Chapter 2.3.1.2). While it is true that there were many implicit compliments in the Spanish corpus, there seemed to be some emergent patterns: likening a participant to a model, a subset of this consisted of likening a participant's photo to an album cover (discussed in Section 5.2.1 with respect to compliments on appearance), and use of interjections.

Likening a person to a model is an implicit compliment that requires understanding on the parts of both the speaker and the hearer that models are more physically attractive than an average person, and it also requires the listener to infer from the compliment that he is equally attractive to a model, which would be regarded by many as a compliment. Likening a Spanish male participant to a model was the type of implicit compliment that occurred most frequently, with ten instances. However, five of the ten implicit compliments likening a participant to a model were directed towards one participant and came from the same man. These examples are given in Example 5.19.

Example 5. 19 Comparison of SM11 to a model

- (a) Photo of SM11, posing like a model

Male 2: *Foto número dos de modelo!!!* ('Photo number two of a model!!!')

- (b) Photo of SM11 wearing a leather biker jacket

Male 1: *Sin comentarios... yo si me lo llevo!* ('Without commentary... I'll definitely take one!')

The fact that the majority of the modeling comments come from one male does not necessarily detract from the idea of an emerging pattern of implicit appearance compliments comparing a participant to a model. Example 5.20 shows some other implicit compliments using comparison to a model.

Example 5. 20 Comparison of participant to a model

Photo of SM22 in black and white, looking at the camera seductively

Male 1: *Y muy pronto podrán descargar el catálogo 2011 :)* ('And very soon you can download the 2011 catalogue :))')

Male 2: *modelo ya eh! ouh yeah!* ('model now eh! oh yeah!')

The second trend or pattern of implicit compliment is similar in nature to the compliments likening participants to models, and is best classified as a subset of model comparisons. This sort of compliment is achieved by likening a photo to an album cover, which is very similar to the first compliment by Male 1 in Example 5.20. More examples of this sort of compliment are found in Example 5.21.

Example 5. 21 Compliments likening a photo to an album cover

(a) *Nuevo disco 2010! jajaj* ('New disc 2010! haha')

(b) *ahí sobra uno para la carátula de un album de los Beatles*
('here is one good enough to be a Beatles album cover')

Another example of likening a photo to an album cover was in Example 5.5. As with compliments likening the participant to a model, compliments comparing a photo to an album cover rely on the compliment recipient inferring that looking like something from an album cover is positive. This sort of

compliment could potentially relate to photography or artistic skills, as well as appearance. I have classified the compliments in Examples 5.5 and 5.21 as compliments on appearance, as the recipient of the compliment appears in the photo. An interesting example of an implicit compliment relating to ability is given in Example 5.22.

Example 5. 22 Implicit compliment on ability

SM34's photo of a male friend playing the guitar, and two female friends looking on in a park

SM34: *Esta foto es de portada de disco. Genial.* ('This is photo is like an album cover. Brilliant.')

Male 1: *Totalmente* ('Totally')

This example is slightly confusing, and Male 1's compliment could potentially be interpreted in various ways. The photo in Example 5.22 appears in SM34's photos, but he does not appear in the photo itself. SM34's comment in Example 5.22 is a compliment of his own photo, and I have excluded it from the analysis of compliments (discussed in Chapter 3). Male 1's comment, however, agrees with SM34's comment, thereby echoing the sentiment expressed by SM34, which is that the photo in Example 5.22 is of the same caliber that one would see on an album cover. While this example is not exactly an example of an implicit compliment made by likening a photo to an album cover, it is an agreement with such a statement, and therefore fits within this pattern of implicit compliments. Due to the fact that SM34 does not appear in the photo in Example 5.22, I classified this compliment as one pertaining to ability. There is nothing co-occurring with the photo by way of caption or comment alluding to who took the photo, but it is logical to assume that SM34 took the photo.

The other theme of implicit compliments in the Spanish data, interjections, did not appear very frequently, and varied considerably in how it manifested itself. The instances of this type of compliment are listed in Example 5.23.

Example 5. 23 Interjections as implicit compliments

- (a) *Ay ayyyy <3* ('Ay ayyyy <3')
- (b) *oyoyoyoyoyoy!* (oyoyoyoyoyoy!')
- (c) *miammm miammm* ('yum yum')

Of the interjections in Example 5.23, (a) and (b) related to a participant's appearance. Example 5.23(c) related to food, and was counted as an implicit compliment on ability (cooking) (see Golato, 2011, for further discussion of gustatory compliments). This pattern of implicit compliment heavily relies on the hearer imagining the written words as they sound when spoken: these compliments are an attempt at replicating sounds produced in spoken conversation.

The examples of implicit compliments in this section have shown that even a form of compliment thought of as creative can follow patterns to an extent. That is not to say that the types of implicit compliments discussed here were the only types; there were many more examples of implicit compliments in the Spanish corpus, but these did not follow the loose pattern of comparing a participant to a model or to food. The majority of the remainder of implicit compliments related to appearance.

5.5 Supportive elements in compliments

Spanish men used a number of supportive elements in compliments directed at other men. The supportive elements took a number of forms. I discuss the use of supportive elements with compliments generally in Section 5.5.1, and continue by discussing each type of supportive element in more detail in the following sections. See Chapter 4.5 for a discussion of each supportive element considered here.

5.5.1 Overview

Before examining each type of supportive element, it is useful to give a general overview of the various types, as well as how frequently each occurs both with respect to compliment topics and syntactic patterns of compliments. The supportive elements used by Spanish men when complimenting each other on FB include: laughter, interjections, emoticons, forms of address, *besos* ('kisses') and *abrazos* ('hugs'), textual alteration, repeated punctuation, and 'like' (see Chapter 4.5 for a general overview of supportive elements). Table 5.8 shows the frequency of supportive elements (apart from 'like', which is discussed on its own in Section 5.5.7) occurring with each compliment topic.

Table 5. 8 Supportive elements vis-à-vis compliment topics

	Appearance	Possessions	Ability	Personality	Friendship	Children	Pets	Total
Textual alteration	55	-	22	4	2	2	-	85
Repeated punctuation	51	-	15	4	2	-	-	72
Emoticon	42	-	12	3	1	-	-	58
Form of address	21	-	7	4	-	-	-	32

Laughter	16	-	6	4	1	-	-	27
Interjection	14	-	5	4	1	1	-	25
<i>Abrazos/Besos</i>	8	-	1	1	1	-	-	11
Total	207	-	68	24	8	3	-	310

Table 5.8 shows that the most common form of supportive element among Spanish men on FB was textual alteration, though repeated punctuation was also used frequently, as were emoticons. Spanish men used forms of address, laughter, and interjections with moderate frequency. Although there were some examples of Spanish men using *besos* and *abrazos*, this supportive element did not feature as much as any of the others. There were examples of each type of supportive element found with compliments on appearance, ability, and personality. Compliments on possessions and pets were not accompanied by any supportive elements (see Table 5.10 for more information on absence of any supportive elements). Given that most of the compliments given to Spanish men were about appearance (134 total), the largest number of supportive elements accompanied compliments on appearance. Table 5.8 shows, however, that there were many more supportive elements associated with compliments on appearance than the compliments themselves (207 versus 134). This demonstrates that compliments may contain more than one supportive element; indeed, this was also the case for the topics of ability, personality, and friendship.

The use of supportive elements as compared to syntactic patterns of compliments largely follows a pattern of the most frequently used syntactic patterns being accompanied by the highest number of supportive elements, and that there are, in most cases, a greater number of supportive elements than compliments within each syntactic pattern, due to use of multiple supportive elements, illustrated in Table 5.9.

Table 5. 9 Supportive elements vis-à-vis syntactic patterns

	Laughter	Interjection	Emoticon	Form of Address	<i>Abrazos/Besos</i>	Textual alteration	Repeated punctuation	Total
A	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	3
B	3	1	10	4	2	8	6	34
C	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	3
D	-	2	-	1	-	2	2	7
E	-	2	2	3	2	4	5	18
F	2	3	3	1	1	5	4	19
G	4	1	10	4	2	19	15	55
H	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
I	2	3	6	5	-	7	7	30
J	4	7	10	3	1	14	9	48
L	-	-	1	1	-	2	2	6
O	2	-	1	-	-	1	1	5
P	-	1	2	-	-	6	2	11
Q	4	2	2	3	2	5	8	26
R	3	2	8	5	-	10	8	36
S	2	-	1	1	-	1	2	7
V	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1

A few points stand out from Table 5.9; the first is that although on its own category J was used most frequently, it was surpassed in terms of supportive elements by pattern G. This may indicate that due to the creative nature of implicit compliments, they do not need to be accompanied by supportive elements as often as other syntactic patterns of compliments, as the effort and sincerity that accompanies an implicit compliment is obvious.

The results for pattern B are also interesting, in that despite only being used 18 times by Spanish men, these men used supportive elements with this pattern almost twice as often (34 instances). This was also the case with compliments that did not fall within any established syntactic pattern (pattern

Q). There were 12 compliments with no discernible pattern in the data, and these 12 compliments were accompanied by 26 supportive elements.

The other noteworthy point about supportive elements is their complete absence in compliments, an overview of which is given in Table 5.10.

Table 5. 10 No supportive elements

	Appearance	Possessions	Ability	Personality	Friendship	Children	Pets	Total	% of total compliments
A	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	33%
B	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	11%
C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
D	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
E	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	10%
F	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	2	15%
G	3	-	2	1	-	-	-	6	17%
H	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	50%
I	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	5	24%
J	6	-	2	1	-	-	-	9	24%
L	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	3	43%
O	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	20%
P	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	13%
Q	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	17%
R	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	4	18%
S	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	3	38%
V	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	67%
Total	23	2	10	5	2	0	1	45	21%
% of total compliments	17%	100%	21%	26%	33%	0	100%	21%	

There were no supportive elements used in nearly a quarter (21.2%) of Spanish compliments. Interestingly, compliments on possessions were never accompanied by supportive elements in the corpus, which contradicts previous research that claimed that compliments on possessions are face-threatening acts (see Holmes 1988:455, and Herbert 1990:214). If compliments on possessions are universally viewed as face-threatening acts, one would assume that, in order

to mitigate this threat, such compliments would be accompanied by some form of supportive element. The Spanish sample, though relatively small, suggests that this notion is not true for Spanish men.

Apart from the categories of possessions and pets, the proportion of compliment categories that contain no supportive elements hovers in the area of 25%, which is close to the overall total for the data. That is, in 21% of all Spanish male compliments, there is no accompanying supportive element. Compliments relating to children in the Spanish corpus were always accompanied by supportive elements, however.

5.5.2 Textual alteration

The supportive element that Spanish men used the most when giving compliments on FB was textual alteration. This took various forms and was used in several different combinations. Table 5.11 gives an overview of the use of textual alteration by Spanish men, as compared to categories of compliments.

Table 5. 11 Use of textual alteration as a supportive element

	Appearance	Possessions	Ability	Personality	Friendship	Children	Pets	Total
Alternative spelling	7	-	4	2	-	1	-	14
+Diminutive	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
+Elongation	5	-	3	-	-	-	-	8
+Elongation + Repetition	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
+Diminutive + Elongation	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
+Repetition	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Augmentative	3	-	2	-	-	-	-	5
+Elongation	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	3
Capitals	3	-	3	-	-	-	-	6
+Elongation	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	3
+Augmentative + Elongation	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Diminutive	4	-	1	1	-	1	-	7

Elongation	16	-	5	1	2	-	-	24
+Diminutive	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
+Repetition	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
+Special characters	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Repetition	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Special characters	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total	55	-	22	4	2	2	-	85

Table 5.11 makes clear that Spanish men favored elongation most heavily, as it was used on its own in 28% of instances of textual alteration. Elongation was the most popular form of textual alteration used in compliments on appearance and ability, and was the only form used in compliments on friendship. When instances of elongation used on its own are combined with elongation when used along with another form of textual alteration, compliments featuring elongation account for over half of all uses of textual alteration. Elongation has been illustrated in previous examples in this chapter; Example 5.24 gives further illustrations of both vowel and consonant elongation.

Example 5. 24 Compliments with elongation as a supportive element

(a) *Guapooooos!! :D* ('Handsome!! :D')

(b) *GUAPOSSSSSSSSSSSSSji* ('HANDSOME')

Example 5.24 is interesting in that it shows variations on the same word, *guapo*, all using elongation. Spanish men elongated the 'o' at the end, or the 's' at the end (when making the word plural). This example is also useful in demonstrating how coding electronic, naturally occurring data is nearly impossible due to the enormous amount of variation, even in a single word.

Spanish men used alternative spellings frequently as a supportive element. By and large, changes to spelling seemed to be a method of oralizing written text, specifically with an Andalusian accent. There were some common alterations that Spanish men made in spellings, listed in Table 5.12.

Table 5. 12 Alternative spellings as a supportive element

Correct spelling	Alternative spelling
<i>Bonito</i> ('pretty')	<i>Bonitou</i>
<i>Bueno</i> ('good')	<i>Gueno, weno</i>
<i>Cosa</i> ('thing')	<i>Cocha</i>
<i>Guapo</i> ('handsome')	<i>Wapo, uapo</i>
<i>Gustar</i> ('to like')	<i>Guhtar</i>
<i>Jérez</i> ('Jerez')	<i>Jeré</i>
<i>Mucho</i> ('a lot')	<i>Musho</i>
<i>Muy</i> ('very')	<i>Mu, mui</i>
<i>Sexy</i> ('sexy')	<i>Sessi, sessy</i>

As was the case with elongation, there is considerable variation in alternative spellings (not to mention any elongation of various letters in these words), which makes automated coding extremely difficult.

Diminutives and augmentatives occurred with some regularity, but there was little variation in the suffixes that were used by Spanish men. Spanish men used the diminutives *-ito*, *-in*, and *-illo*, shown in Example 5.25.

Example 5. 25 Use of diminutives as a supportive element

- (a) *Así como me gustan con barbita!!!* ('That's how I like them with a little beard!!!')
- (b) *Que guapito :)* ('How handsome :)')

This section has shown the various ways in which Spanish men use textual alteration, a supportive element, when complimenting each other on FB. There is a finite number of methods of textual alteration that the Spanish men used in this study, but it seems there are unlimited ways in which people can change their texts. Many of the methods of textual alteration aid the reader (in this case, the study participants, as the "hearer" of the compliment) in imagining the utterances as being spoken out loud.

5.5.3 Repeated punctuation

Repeated punctuation was the second most common form of supportive element used by Spanish men when complimenting each other on FB (see Chapter 4.5.2 for a description of this supportive element). Table 5.13 shows which forms of punctuation, or combinations of forms, that Spanish men used in relation to topics of compliments.

Table 5. 13 Use of repeated punctuation as a supportive element

	Appearance	Possessions	Ability	Personality	Friendship	Children	Pets	Total
Ellipsis marks	13	-	6	-	-	-	-	19
+Exclamation marks	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	3
Exclamation marks	35	-	7	4	1	-	-	47
+Question marks	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	2
Question marks	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total	51	-	15	4	2	-	-	72

Exclamation marks were the form of repeated punctuation most used overall, and were also the most frequently used in the categories of appearance, ability, and personality. There is no pattern as such for when repeated punctuation is used with respect to compliment categories. Table 5.9 demonstrated how repeated punctuation was used most frequently in conjunction with syntactic pattern G, but this is not highly illuminative, as pattern G, along with pattern J, were most common syntactic patterns used across all categories of compliments (see Table 5.5), so one would expect the most frequently occurring syntactic pattern to have the highest number of supportive elements associated with it.

Some examples of how Spanish men used repeated punctuation are featured in Example 5.26, as well as in Example 5.3.

Example 5. 26 Use of repeated punctuation marks in compliments

- (a) *Eso es todo muchacho!!! Guapo, guapo, guapo!!!* ('This is everything, man!!! Handsome, handsome, handsome!!!')
- (b) *Así, o más guapo????!!!* ('Like this, or more handsome????!!!')

Use of repeated punctuation, particularly exclamation marks, seems to be a useful shorthand way of expressing enthusiasm and positivity without too much effort.

5.5.4 Forms of address

Spanish men used forms of address with some regularity when complimenting each other, but there was considerable variation in the forms and frequency with which they were used. Table 5.14 gives an overview of the forms of address in relation to the topics of compliments with which they occurred (following Placencia et al. (2015:557), see Chapter 4.5.3).

Table 5. 14 Forms of address as a supportive element

	Appearance	Possessions	Ability	Personality	Friendship	Children	Pets	Total
Names								
Altered name	6	-	2	1	-	-	-	9
First name	4	-	-	1	-	-	-	5
Full name	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Family term								
<i>Cuñado</i> ('brother in law')	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Familia</i> ('family')	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Hermano</i> ('brother')	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Mi niño</i> ('my boy')	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Descriptive term								
<i>Campeón</i> ('champion')	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Chicos</i> ('boys')	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Chiquillo</i> ('little guy')	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Gordito</i> ('little fatty')	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2

<i>Hombre</i> ('man')	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Maricona</i> ('faggot')	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Mi gente</i> ('my people')	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Muchacho</i> ('guy')	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Pareja</i> ('pair')	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Paya</i> ¹²	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Petardo</i> ('firework')	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Pisha</i> ('dick')	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Total	21	-	8	3	-	-	-	32

Table 5.14 shows the many forms of address used by Spanish men when complimenting each other on FB, but what is most interesting about the results is that by and large, Spanish men favored either a person's first name, or an altered form of a given name, when using forms of address with a compliment. I found this surprising: it seems to demonstrate an absence of creativity, or perhaps even an element of formality in male-male PenSp compliments on FB. The use of altered names suggests, however, a certain degree of familiarity between participants, but these names do not appear to be special names between friends in this corpus, but more standard hypocorisms, for example Pepe for Jose. Apart from a participant's first name or altered name, the only other form of address that was used more than once by Spanish men was *gordito*.

The more interesting, or non-standardized forms of address used by Spanish men when complimenting was the use of mock impolite forms of

¹² This form of address caused some debate when presented at the 12th International Conference on (Im)politeness in Cambridge, UK on 17 July, 2019. Some audience members suggested that the compliment involving this form of address was really a play on the words *vaya para alla* ('go to there') in the original comment: *Que wapo estas gorditooo ;)* *ainsss aver si coincidimos cuand vaya paya ;)* ('How handsome you are little fattyyy ;) let's see if we run into eachother when you go [non-gypsy/there]. Some suggested that *vaya para alla* had been shortened to *vaya paya*. After further thought and consulting some study participants, I am leaving this as a form of address, though not with the meaning of the word as written: 'non-gypsy': Spanish study participants took the view that *paya* in this scenario was short for *payaso* ('clown'). See Example 5.27 for the full exchange in question.

address, including: *gordito*, *maricon*, *paya*, *petardo*, and *pisha* (see Mugford and Montes, 2020). The use of these forms of address appears to conflict with the general complimenting behavior of the Spanish men and their FB friends on this study: in general, there was no macho posturing among the Spanish men and there were many examples of open displays of affection and even flirtation. These displays juxtaposed against some of these slightly pejorative forms of address are slightly jarring and muddles the view of Spanish men somewhat. Example 5.27, in which Male 2 may be a non-native Spanish speaker, shows how seemingly impolite forms of address are understood.

Example 5. 27 Use of *gordito* as a form of address

Photo of SM22 standing on a bridge with colorful buildings behind him.

- (01) Male 1: *Que wapo estas gorditooo ;) ainsss aver si coincidimos cuand vaya paya ;)* ('How handsome you are little fatty ;) let's see if we can get together when you come back clown ;)')
- (02) Male 2: *Gordito? Estás ciego? :D* ('Little fatty? Are you blind? :D')
- (03) Male 1: *Gordito...es una muletilla es como si le digera cariii ;)* *ya se que esta wenorro jaja le quiero mas* ('Little fatty... it's a pet name it's like if I called him sweetheart ;) I know that he's very handsome ha I love him more')
- (04) SM22: *estáis los dos fatal xD* ('you two are the worst xD')
- (05) Male 2: *Claro... :D solo iba a decir que no estás gordo en absoluto...na más* ('Ok... :D I was only going to say that you're not at all fat... nothing else')

- (06) SM22: *jaja, si, si, lo comprendí =) Gordi, es una especie de “apodo afectivo”* (‘haha yes, yes, I understood =D Little fatty, it’s a type of “affectionate nickname”’)
- (07) Male 2: *Jaja vale no lo sabía... especialidades del español :P* (‘Haha ok I didn’t know... specialties of Spanish :P’)
- (08) Male 1: *:).jajaj (:).hahaha’)*

Example 5.27 provides helpful insight into how young Spanish men view and use mock impoliteness, and how this sort of knowledge is something that those in the group know and can cause confusion to those outside of the group.

5.5.5 Emoticons

The data for this study were gathered in late 2011, which was prior to there being a large array of emojis available for use on FB. Users instead had to type in the characters to make up emoticons, some of which later became emojis on FB. Table 5.15 shows the emoticons used by Spanish men when giving compliments, with respect to compliment categories.

Table 5. 15 Use of emoticons when complimenting

		Appearance	Possessions	Ability	Personality	Friendship	Children	Pets	Total
(a)	;-) or ;)	6	-	1	-	-	-	-	7
(b)	:) or =)	10	-	3	1	-	-	-	14
(c)	xD or XD	6	-	3	1	1	-	-	11
(d)	:D or =D	7	-	1	1	-	-	-	9
(e)	;P or :P or =P	7	-	-	1	-	-	-	8
(f)	<3	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
(g)	:3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
(h)	:0	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
(i)	:(-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
(j)	(L)	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1

(k)	* *	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Total	42	-	11	4	1	-	-	58

Table 5.15 shows how Spanish men favored emoticons in the form of (b), (c), or (d) most (see Table 5.15). Other emoticons that were popular with Spanish men include (a) and (e). There was only one instance of a ‘sad face’ emoticon (i) in the Spanish corpus; its use is given below in Example 5.28.

Example 5. 28 Use of ‘sad face’ emoticon (i)

Photo of a windmill from SM8’s album labeled ‘Bremen’

Male 1: *:O impresionante, yo quiero ir! :(* (‘:O amazing, I want to go!
:()’)

The use of a ‘sad face’ emoticon (i) in Example 5.28 is interesting, as one typically would not anticipate sadness with giving a compliment. Its use seems to work here, in that it appears to imply sadness on the part of Male 1 that he was not able to be in Bremen with SM8, possibly because he was invited and could not come, or because he missed his friend SM8. Example 5.28 is also interesting because it shows the use of multiple emoticons along with one compliment. This did not happen frequently in the Spanish corpus; there were only two other examples of the use of multiple emoticons within one compliment turn, shown in Example 5.29.

Example 5. 29 Use of multiple emoticons in one compliment

(a) SM16’s photo of himself and four friends at a festival

Male 1: *jajajaj vaya personajes XD...k bien nos lo pasamos
eehh!!! :D* (‘ha ha ha what personalities XD... what a good
time we had eh!!! :D’)

(b) SM22’s self photo

Male 2: *Te como! =P Qué edad tenías aquí SM22? xD* ('I'll eat you! =P How old were you here SM22? xD')

There is nothing particularly remarkable about the compliments in Example 5.29 that indicates a possible reason for using two emoticons. It is interesting how the emoticons are placed at the end of each sentence in each compliment, but that could just be an aspect of the style of the men giving the compliments.

Apart from the emoticon used in Example 5.28, Spanish men primarily used positive emoticons in conjunction with compliments. This is not surprising, as a compliment is meant to be a positive message, therefore one would expect a positive emoticon to accompany such a message.

5.5.6 *Laughter, interjections, and besos and abrazos*

Compared to the types of supportive elements discussed in the previous section, Spanish men used laughter, interjections, and expressions of physical affection relatively infrequently. Table 5.16 shows the use of these forms of supportive elements in relation to compliment topics.

Table 5. 16 Other forms of supportive elements

	Appearance	Possessions	Ability	Personality	Friendship	Children	Pets	Total
Laughter	16	-	6	4	1	-	-	27
<i>Ha</i>	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
<i>Ja</i>	12	-	4	2	1	-	-	-
<i>Je</i>	3	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
<i>Ji</i>	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Interjections	14	-	5	4	1	1	-	25
<i>Ains/ay/ayy</i>	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Coño</i> ('shit')	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

<i>Dios</i> ('god')	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
<i>Eh/hey</i>	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Joer/joío</i> ('fuck')	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
<i>Oh</i>	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
<i>Oi/oy</i>	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
<i>Olé</i> ('bravo')	1	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Ooooo</i>	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
<i>Oye</i> ('hey')	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Pero</i> ('but')	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Uuf</i>	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Physical affection	8	-	1	1	1	-	-	11
<i>Abrazos</i> ('hugs')	7	-	1	1	1	-	-	-
<i>Besos</i> ('kisses')	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	38	-	12	9	3	1	-	63

Table 5.16 shows that laughter was popular, particularly when used along with compliments on appearance. Laughter took various forms: *ha*, *ja*, *je*, and *ji* repeated any number of times, with *ja* being the most frequently used among the four. As with the other supportive elements discussed here, the frequency of laughter closely follows the number of each category of compliment; for example, laughter occurred the most with compliments on appearance, and compliments on appearance were the most common category of compliment.

Spanish men used a range of interjections when giving compliments. The majority of interjections were given alongside compliments on appearance, but when the data is given in more detail, as in Table 5.16, one can see that *olé* and *ay* (or some variation thereof) were the interjections used most by Spanish men, and was used three times in compliments on ability. This suggests that compliments on some topics, in this case ability, may be particularly well suited to the use of particular interjections.

Spanish men also used a few interjections that demonstrated the use of mock impoliteness, those being *joer*, and *joío*, which are forms of *joder*, and *coño*. These vulgar interjections were mainly used along with compliments on

appearance, but there was one instance of use with a compliment on personality. The uses of some interjections as a form of mock impoliteness are given in Example 5.30.

Example 5. 30 Use of vulgar interjections with compliments

- (a) *JOERRRRRRR ESA CARA EM26 MUAHHAHAHAHAHHA*
 ('FUCKKKKK THIS FACE EM26 MUAHHAHAHA')
- (b) *qué guapo joío <3* ('how handsome fuck <3')

As Example 5.30 shows, the use of vulgar interjections does not appear to be an attempt at expressing anger or disgust, but instead a more colorful way of saying 'wow', a form of mock impoliteness.

The final form of supportive element in Table 5.16 is expressions of physical affection, in which Spanish men added the word *besos* or *abrazos* to compliments. There was only one incidence of *besos*, which accompanied a compliment on appearance. *Abrazos*, on the other hand, occurred ten times, and across a range of four compliment categories: appearance, ability, personality, and friendship. The compliment that contained *besos* is reproduced in Example 5.31.

Example 5. 31 Use of *besos* in a Spanish male-male compliment

Photo of SM15 at his wedding with his new wife

Male 1: *felicidades a los dos, muy guapos por ciertos , una pena q no pude ir xq estoy trabajando o deseo lo mejor del mundo un beso familia* ('congratulations to the two of you, very handsome certainly, a shame that I couldn't go because I am working I wish you the best in the world a kiss family')

This compliment to SM15 appears also to be directed towards SM15's wife, who is pictured with SM15 in the photo from Example 5.31. This is the only example of the use of *besos* and it occurs in a compliment that is not directed solely at a man. This may indicate that including *besos* in a compliment directed only towards a man from another man is not done among Spanish men, but having a woman's presence to receive the *besos* makes it acceptable.

The presence of a woman does not seem to be required for the use of *abrazos*, on the other hand, though it does occur in the compliments in Example 5.32.

Example 5. 32 Use of *abrazos* in compliments

- (a) Photo of SM34 in the sea with his sister

Male 1: *Que bien se los ve!!! abrazo Cuñado!!!* ('How you good you both look!!! a hug brother-in-law!!!')

- (b) Photo of SM34 with his parents and sister

Male 1: *Que linda Familia!!! Un abrazo grande a los cuatro!!!*
('What a lovely Family!!! A big hug to the four of you!!!')

Written forms of affection do not occur exclusively with respect to mixed sex photos; such situations account for around one third of the uses of forms of affection as supportive elements. Example 5.33 shows the use of forms of affection as supportive elements in compliments on photos that only feature a man.

Example 5. 33 Use of *abrazos* in compliments on appearance

- (a) *Qué bonita foto y qué increíbles recuerdos. Te ves muy guapo :)* *Un abrazo* ('What a pretty photo and incredible memories. You look very handsome :) A hug')

- (b) *Hey hey!!! qué guardaditas te tenías estas fotos!!! Te ves muy guapo. Un abrazo :)* ('Hey hey!!! how hidden did you have these photos!!! You look very handsome. A hug :)')

The use of written expressions of physical affection demonstrate that Spanish men sometimes display affectionate behavior when complimenting, but the fairly low occurrence points to the use of *besos* and *abrazos* as a non-standard addition to a compliment. It is possible that the use of *besos* and *abrazos* indicated a higher level of sincerity or an extra level of affection. It could also, on the other hand, simply be indicative of the communicative style of a few men out of many.

5.5.7 'Like'

Table 5.17 shows how Spanish men use 'like' as a supportive element, as compared to Spanish women. The use of 'like' as a compliment response is discussed in Section 5.6.2. I have included the rates for Spanish women's use of 'like' as a point of comparison for the Spanish men.

Table 5. 17 Use of 'like' as a supportive element in compliments

1	2			3		
	2a	2b	2c	3a	3b	3c
	Total 'likes' comments			Total 'likes' photos		
	Own	Men	Women	Own	Men	Women
SM1	5			15		
	0	1	4	1	2	12
SM2	QUIT THE STUDY					
SM3	EXCLUDED					
SM4	NO PHOTOS					
SM5	0			25		
	0	0	0	0	10	15
SM6	0			38		

	0	0	0	1	18	19
SM7	13			44		
	1	3	9	2	12	30
SM8	19			102		
	18	0	1	0	37	65
SM9	NO PHOTOS					
SM10	41			85		
	35	5	1	1	48	36
SM11	254			430		
	177	13	64	12	86	332
SM12	3			4		
	1	1	1	0	2	2
SM13	58			133		
	32	16	10	10	57	66
SM14	8			28		
	1	5	2	3	14	11
SM15	63			389		
	37	5	21	2	130	249
SM16	52			198		
	1	10	41	0	71	127
SM17	0			10		
	0	0	0	1	3	6
SM18	1			3		
	0	0	1	1	1	1
SM19	52			216		
	15	13	24	4	54	158
SM20	11			35		
	5	6	0	1	18	16
SM21	0			25		
	0	0	0	2	5	18
SM22	932			1739		
	499	176	255	73	661	1005
SM23	NO PHOTOS					
SM24	0			3		
	0	0	0	0	0	3
SM25	0			1		
	0	0	0	0	1	0
SM26	18			67		
	10	2	6	6	16	45
SM27	NO PHOTOS					
SM28	0			139		
	0	0	0	7	49	83
SM29	15			31		
	8	2	5	3	9	19

SM30	NO PHOTOS					
SM31	58			218		
	11	32	15	4	117	97
SM32	0			488		
	0	0	0	25	124	339
SM33	4			12		
	0	0	4	1	2	9
SM34	153			384		
	40	33	80	9	124	251
TOTAL	1,760			4,862		
	891	323	544	169	1,671	3,014

Table 5.17 shows behavior that one has come to expect of men and women with respect to compliments. That is to say, on the whole, men ‘liked’ both comments and photos less frequently than did women. Spanish participants ‘liked’ very few of their own photographs, but ‘liked’ just over half of comments that they received. Other men, apart from participants, ‘liked’ photos more often than they ‘liked’ comments. It is much easier to ‘like’ a photograph than it is to ‘like’ a comment: ‘liking’ a photo requires relatively little effort or thought. ‘Liking’ a comment, on the other hand, indicates that the person ‘liking’ the comment has at least read it, which requires more effort than simply viewing a photo. The Spanish women ‘liked’ less than a third of comments, but ‘liked’ nearly two thirds of photos. This, coupled with the notion that ‘liking’ a comment requires more effort than ‘liking’ a photo, reinforces the idea that women’s compliment behavior is highly formulaic, and, in the case of FB, almost instinctive and reactionary.

Spanish participants rarely ‘liked’ their own photographs, a behavior which adheres to modesty constraints. A participant ‘liking’ his own photo could be seen as trying to promote or call attention to his photo, presumably in order to ensure that more FB friends view it and comment on it. Posting a photo on FB

can itself be considered a form of self-promotion; ‘liking’ one’s own photo could be viewed as a step too far. On the other hand, Spanish men ‘liked’ just over half of the comments that related to their photos. These ‘likes’ could be viewed as compliment responses, or supportive elements, both of which are discussed below.

5.6 Compliment responses

Having discussed Spanish men and their behavior towards each other on FB with respect to giving each other compliments, it is now time to turn to a discussion of Spanish male compliment response behavior on FB. The results have already shown that overall, Spanish men do not give each other many compliments, particularly compared to the number of comments that these men make on each other’s photos. We may therefore expect to see even less male-male interaction in the form of compliment responses. Table 5.18 shows a general overview of Spanish male behavior on FB, both with respect to comments, compliments, responses, and ‘liking’ compliments. This information is presented in comparison to Spanish females, in order to provide a high-level overview of how Spanish men differ from their female counterparts.

Table 5. 18 Overview of Spanish male behavior on Facebook

Total photos with comments	1,931
Total comments (not participant)	7.115
Made by males	3,800
Made by females	3.315
Total compliments	3,800
Made by males	212
Made by females	679
Total written compliment responses	236
Responses to males	49
Responses to females	187
Total ‘likes’ of compliments	622

'Likes' of male compliments	41
'Likes' of female compliments	581
Total Likes (all comments)	867

Table 5.18 demonstrates that Spanish women are more interactive on FB overall than Spanish men, both in making comments and giving compliments to men. In the following sections, I focus exclusively on the Spanish male participants responses to compliments from other Spanish men. I discuss the impact of compliment topic on the type of compliment response, as well as how the Spanish male compliment responses fit within the compliment response taxonomy applied here. Finally, I discuss how the Spanish male participants used supportive elements in their compliment responses.

5.6.1 The effect of compliment topic on compliment response rates

In order to gain a better understanding of Spanish male compliment response behavior on FB, I first present the number of compliment responses per compliment category, as compared to the number of compliments per category, shown in Table 5.19.

Table 5. 19 Compliment responses vis-à-vis compliment categories

		Total male compliments	Number of responses	Response rate per category
Categories of compliments	Appearance	134(63%)	33 (67%)	24.6%
	Possessions	2 (.95%)	1 (2%)	50%
	Ability	48 (22.7%)	6 (12%)	12.5%
	Personality	19 (9%)	7 (14%)	36.8%
	Friendship	6 (2.8%)	0 (0%)	0%
	Child's appearance	2 (.95%)	2 (4%)	100%
	Pets	1 (4.7%)	0 (0%)	0%
		212	49 (23.1%)	

Table 5.19 shows that compliment responses do not track with compliment topics as closely as expected. The proportion of compliment

responses does not correspond to the proportion of compliments in every category. The quantity of responses for compliments on appearance is approximately similar: 67% of responses related to compliments on appearance, while 63% of all compliments related to appearance. The surprise shift comes with compliments on ability and personality: compliments on ability accounted for 22.7% of all compliments, but only received 12% of responses, while compliments on personality made up 9% of all compliments total but received 14% of the responses from Spanish male participants. This may be an example of modesty constraints at work: the Spanish male participants in this study appear to be less comfortable acknowledging their abilities than their personality characteristics, based on the frequency with which they acknowledge these types of compliments. A larger sample would be needed to further investigate this point to see if the trend continues.

5.6.2 Compliment response taxonomy

Applying Holmes's (1986) taxonomy of compliment responses to Spanish male compliment responses shows a slight preference for accepting a compliment, as displayed in Table 5.20.

Table 5. 20 Categories of compliment responses

Response type	Number of responses
Accept	23
Appreciation token	7
Emoticon (w/o comment)	2
Like (w/o comment)	41
Agreeing utterance	12
Upgrade	0
Downgrade	3
Return compliment	1
Reject	2
Disagreeing utterance	1

Challenge sincerity	1
Deflect/Evade	23
Shift credit	5
Informative comment	8
Ignore	3
Legitimate evasion	4
Request reassurance/repetition	2
Make a joke	2
No written acknowledgement	164

Even though the results of Table 5.20 show that acceptance is the most frequently response used by Spanish men (discounting no response at all, which occurred most often), Spanish men deflected or evaded a compliment almost as frequently as they accepted a compliment from another Spanish man. Table 5.20 includes use of 'like' in response to a compliment, but I have not included it in the total count for compliment acceptance, as it is not an explicit, written response. Responding to a compliment with 'like' and nothing more is a separate, FB-unique compliment response, and there is little to discuss in this respect, as it does not consist of anything apart from clicking 'like'.

In order to gain a better understanding of these broad results, I have arranged the information in Table 5.21 to show which compliment response strategies and sub-strategies occur with which compliment categories.

Table 5. 21 Compliment responses according to category of compliment

	Appearance	Possessions	Ability	Personality	Friendship	Children	Pets
Accept	17	1	2	1	-	2	-
Appreciation token	7	-	-	-	-	-	-
Emoticon (w/o comment)	(1)	-	-	(1)	-	-	-
'Like' (w/o comment)	(28)	-	(9)	(3)	(1)	-	-
Agreeing utterance	8	1	-	1	-	2	-
Upgrade	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Downgrade/qualifying utterance	2	-	1	-	-	-	-

Return compliment	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Reject	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
Disagreeing utterance	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Challenge sincerity	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deflect/Evade	15	-	4	5	-	-	-
Shift credit	4	-	1	-	-	-	-
Informative comment	4	-	1	3	-	-	-
Ignore	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Legitimate evasion	1	-	2	1	-	-	-
Request reassurance/repetition	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Make a joke	1	-	-	1	-	-	-

The results of Table 5.21 do not demonstrate a huge preference for any single compliment response strategy or sub-strategy, apart from 'like', which is viewed on its own, separately, though 'like' cannot reasonably be considered to be anything apart from an acceptance, however vague. Spanish men preferred to accept compliments on appearance, but almost equally preferred appreciation tokens and agreeing utterances as response sub-strategies when responding to appearance compliments. When Spanish men deflected or evaded a compliment on appearance, they did this by deploying the full range of sub-strategies available. The Spanish male participants showed a preference for shifting credit or deflecting a compliment on appearance with an informative comment, but this was only a slight preference. Example 5.34 shows examples of how Spanish male participants shifted credit and used informative comments for compliments on appearance.

Example 5. 34 Use of the deflect/shift credit response strategy

(a) Photo of SM22 with caption: "bored..."

Male: *Guapo hasta cuando se aburre... xD* ('Handsome even when he's bored... xD')

SM22: *esos son los ojos con los que me miras tú! :Pp* ('these are the eyes that you see me with! :Pp')

(b) Photo of Seville with caption: “*Sevilla al anochecer*. Seville at dusk”

Male: *que bonita :) artista!* (‘how beautiful :) artist!’)

SM22: *hombre, me enseñan bien :P* (‘dude, they teach me well :P’)

Another interesting point is that while the Spanish male participants accepted compliments and deflected them almost equally (23 and 24 instances, respectively), the Spanish male participants showed the greatest preference for the compliment response sub-strategy of an agreeing utterance in response to a compliment (12 instances). This preference spanned compliment topics, though was notably absent with respect to compliments on ability. The tendency of Spanish men to agree with compliments that they receive from other men, yet the complete lack of compliment upgrades by Spanish men is interesting. Recall from Chapter 2.4.2 that Spanish men often upgraded compliments, though in those scenarios, it was compliments from Spanish women that were upgraded (Lorenzo-Dus 2001:117). This result seems to suggest that Spanish men have a limit in terms of how far they will push modesty constraints: they are willing to accept and even agree with compliments on a variety of topics from other men, but enhancing or upgrading a compliment from another man is a step too far.

The Spanish male participants did not exhibit any specific pattern for expressing agreement with a compliment. Example 5.35 gives some examples of Spanish male participants agreeing with compliments from other Spanish men, across a variety of compliment topics.

Example 5. 35 Use of agreeing utterances in compliment responses

(a) Photo of SM31 with male friend

Male friend: *Ay, ayyyyy <3* (‘Ay, ayyyyy <3’)

SM31: *es que estamos guapos, eh?* ('it's that we are handsome, right?')

(b) Photo of SM22

Male: *me gusta la camiseta!* ('I like the shirt!')

SM22: *sii, verdad?* ('yess, right?')

Example 5.35 shows that the Spanish male participants expressed their agreement with compliments in a variety of ways. The response in (a) is helpful in interpreting an implicit compliment: SM31 agrees that he and the man in the photo are handsome, thereby applying meaning and understanding to the male friend's implicit compliment on appearance.

Spanish men also used appreciation tokens regularly as response sub-strategies to compliments from men. Most instances used *gracias* ('thanks') as an appreciation token. Other appreciations tokens included the use of a shortened form of *gracias*: *asias*, used twice by SM22 and shown in Example 5.36.

Example 5. 36 Use of *asias* in place of *gracias*

Male: *guapos!!* ('handsome!!')

SM22: *asias! :P* ('thanks! :P')

The other type of appreciation token that Spanish participants used was *me alegro* ('I'm glad'), the examples of which are given in Example 5.37.

Example 5. 37 Use of *me alegro* as an appreciation token

Photo of SM13 looking pensively into the distance

Male: *muy chula la foto!* ('very cool photo')

SM13: *Jejeje, me alegro de que te guste; esta tiene un tiempesito ya.*

('Ha ha ha, I'm glad that you like it; this was a while ago now.')

The response of *me alegre* is clearly a method of accepting a compliment. While it is not an explicit expression of thanks, it expresses a similar sentiment, which is different than agreement. Using this expression in response to a compliment has not been highlighted in any other study of compliment responses in Spanish, so fitting it within an existing compliment response strategy is a new endeavor. In some ways, *me alegre* is a bit of a hybrid sub-category of accept: it does not explicitly agree with a compliment, though agreement is implied, nor does it explicitly thank the complimenter, though thanks are also implied. On balance, rather than create a new category, I think it best to include *me alegre* with thanks.

There were instances of Spanish men using multiple compliment response sub-strategies. As with compliments, I focus on the part of the response that responds most clearly to the compliment. An example of this is shown in Example 5.38.

Example 5. 38 Use of multiple compliment response sub-strategies
Photo of SM22 with a female friend

Male: *mas guapos todavía !! :D* ('more handsome still !! :D')

SM22: *asias!! pero en realidad es solo la cámara! xD* ('thanks!! but in reality it's only the camera xD') (accept: appreciation token; deflect: shift credit)

This example shows SM22 first accepting the compliment with an appreciation token (*asias*). He then attempts to shift credit for the compliment (an evasion strategy) by saying that he is not in fact handsome, but that it is the work of the camera (*pero en realidad es solo la cámara*). This example shows SM22 essentially trying to have two bites at the apple: he wants both to accept the

compliment but shift credit at the same time, thus avoiding self-praise and maintaining modesty.

Using multiple response strategies is not something new; this behavior was observed by Maíz-Arévalo in her contrastive study of Spanish and English compliment responses (2012:11). However, although Maíz-Arévalo observed the use of multiple response strategies and sub-strategies, she did not comment on how she treated these in her overall statistics. As discussed in Chapter 3, there are compliments and compliment responses that cover multiple topics or strategies. I assigned the codes that most closely pertain to the overall message of the compliment or response. This is a judgment evaluation, which is easily subject to criticism, but a consistent method of coding is necessary, and, particularly because comments on FB are frequently grammatically incorrect and even less frequently contain punctuation, there is little choice but to focus on the overall message. In Example 5.36, I coded the response as accept: appreciation token, not only because the expression of thanks is the first response given by SM22, but also because the appreciation token seems to be the response that is the clearest when viewed on its own. If *asias!!* were removed from SM22's response, the response would be left as: *pero en realidad es solo la cámara! xD*, which would not make as much sense as when *asias* is included. Therefore accept: appreciation token seemed to be the most sensible category for this response.

There were not many examples in the Spanish male compliment responses of using multiple response strategies. Table 5.22 gives an overview of such responses.

Table 5. 22 Use of multiple compliment response strategies

Compliment category	First response	First sub-response	Second response	Second sub-response
Appearance	Accept	Appreciation token	Deflect	Informative comment
Appearance	Accept	Appreciation token	Deflect	Shift credit
Appearance	Accept	Agreeing utterance	Accept	Return compliment
Ability	Accept	Appreciation token	Accept	Return compliment
Personality	Accept	Agreeing utterance	Deflect	Shift credit
Children	Accept	Agreeing utterance	Deflect	Informative comment

What table 5.22 shows most clearly is that when Spanish men engage multiple compliment response strategies, they almost always follow an acceptance with a deflection. In the two instances where an acceptance was followed by another acceptance, the second sub-strategy was a return of the compliment, which is quite supportive in nature.

The words of the compliment responses do not give the full picture of Spanish male compliment responses on FB. The next section gives an overview of supportive elements that Spanish men use alongside written compliment responses.

5.7 Supportive elements in compliment responses

Section 5.5 showed that Spanish men are not at all averse to adding a variety of supportive elements to the compliments that they give to each other on FB. In this section, I focus on the use of supportive elements in compliment responses by Spanish participants, which did not occur often. For this reason, I

discuss all of the supportive elements used together, rather than splitting the discussion into smaller sections.

Table 5.23 gives an overview of all of the supportive elements used by the Spanish participants in written compliment responses.

Table 5. 23 Supportive elements in compliment responses

	Accept	Reject	Deflect	Total
Emoticon	14	2	12	28
'Like'	15	1	5	21
Laughter	10	1	7	18
Forms of address	5	-	5	10
Alternative spelling	3	-	1	4
Diminutive	1	-	-	1
Elongation	1	-	-	1
Repetition	2	-	-	2
Ellipsis marks	2	-	2	4
+ Exclamation marks	-	-	1	1
Exclamation marks	5	1	3	9
Hugs	1	-	-	1
No supportive element	3	-	3	6
Total supportive elements	62	5	39	106

According to Table 5.23, emoticons were the most popular choice of supportive element by the Spanish participants when responding to a compliment from another Spanish man on FB. The Spanish participants used emoticons, as well as 'like' and laughter, in conjunction with every compliment response strategy. The total number of supportive elements, 106, shows that the Spanish participants often used more than one supportive element when responding to a compliment, as the total number of supportive elements used by the Spanish participants is nearly double the number of written compliment responses.

There was a bit of variation in the types of emoticons used by the Spanish participants in responding to FB compliments. Table 5.24 shows the emoticons used, in relation to the response strategy used.

Table 5. 24 Emoticons used by Spanish men vis-à-vis response strategies

		Accept	Reject	Deflect	Total
(a)	XD	3	1	6	10
(b)	:P	7	-	3	10
(c)	:)	3	1	2	6
(d)	;)	1	-	-	1
(e)	:(-	-	1	1
	Total	14	2	12	28

Spanish men showed a tendency towards playfulness in their use of emoticons in compliment responses; the favored emoticons were the laughing emoticon (a) and the tongue out emoticon (b) (see Chapter 2.4.3.1.1). The smiley face emoticon (c) also featured heavily, and across all response strategies. Perhaps the most surprising result of Table 5.24 is the infrequent use of the winking emoticon (d). Compliment responses, the aim of which are often to minimize self-praise, seem like an ideal place to deploy a winking emoticon as it conveys a certain degree of lightheartedness, or demonstrates that the person responding to the compliment does not take his response (or indeed the compliment) too seriously. The one example of a wink in the Spanish male responses occurs in response to a compliment on appearance. The exchange is reproduced in Example 5.39.

Example 5. 39 Use of winking emoticon when responding to a compliment
Photo of SM11 with a group of men and women

Male: *Así, o más guapo????!!!* ('Like this or more handsome????!!!')

SM11: *jajaja Gracias ;)* ('ha ha ha Thank you ;)')

Male: *No, decía del chico del rojo... pero bueno... tú también!!!* ('No, I was talking about the guy in red... but ok... you too!!!')

Apart from showing the use of a winking emoticon in a compliment response, Example 5.39 also illustrates male banter. SM11's friend's riposte to SM11's

acceptance of the compliment almost looks like a lighthearted admonishment of SM11 accepting a compliment on his appearance. As with most things, it is important to be mindful of context in examining a group's speech as an outside observer. Taken in isolation, the exchange in 5.39 could appear slightly uncomfortable. However, the majority of compliments given to SM11 in this study were given by the male friend in Example 5.39; indeed, of the 17 compliments on appearance that SM11 received, 13 came from the same man as in Example 5.39, showing that there is no shortage of affection flowing from this man to SM11.

Spanish men used forms of address in 20% of their compliment responses on FB. These included: shortened names (2 instances), full name, *hermano* ('brother'), *sosio* ('associate'), *tío* (2 instances), *guapo* ('handsome'), *gordo* ('fatty'), and *hombre* ('man'). Although there were two instances each of Spanish male participants using *tío* ('uncle') and the complimenter's first name, this does not really support an assertion that there is a clear preference for use of these forms of address in compliment responses. Some of the forms of address used in compliment responses by Spanish men were also used in compliments: altered names, full names, *hermano*, and *hombre* (see 5.5.4). Interestingly, *tío*, used twice in responses and thought to be a frequently used-form of address among Spaniards (see Placencia et al., 2015:557-58), was not used at all in Spanish male compliments here.

When responding to compliments, Spanish participants occasionally used textual alterations in the form of alternative spellings. These included two instances of *asias* instead of *gracias* ('thanks'), as discussed above, as well as the following example, with the altered word in bold.

Example 5. 40 Use of alternate spelling in compliment responses

- (a) *Muchas gracias, hermano, pero lo mejor es sin duda la gente que habeis **pasao** siempre pa verme!!!!* ('Thanks very much, brother, but the best thing without a doubt is the people that came to see me')
- (b) *ea,ya **ta**:P* ('hey, that's enough :P')

The two examples of alternative spellings above are instances of spelling as speaking with an Andalusian accent. In Example 5.40(a), the participant has spelled the word *pasado* as *pasao*, which is how the word is often pronounced colloquially in Seville. Similarly, Example 5.40(b) shows the Spanish male participant spelling *está* as *ta*, again an attempt to mimic spoken speech.

Recall from Section 5.5 (Table 5.8) that there were 310 instances of the use of supportive elements in compliments by Spanish men. With a total of 212 compliments, this results in an average of 1.46 supportive elements per compliment. On the other hand, there were 106 instances of the use of supportive elements with 49 compliment responses, or an average of 2.16 supportive elements per compliment response. This may indicate a slight preference for the use of supportive elements when responding to compliments, as opposed to giving compliments. That said, such an assertion comes with a large caveat: while this study only accounts for Spanish men giving and receiving compliments, the two groups (givers and receivers) are separate and discrete. It may simply be the case that the Spanish male participants are more likely to use supportive elements than the Spanish men who are FB friends with the participants. That said, it is likely that supportive elements are used more often

in conjunction with compliment responses in order to minimize face threats. More research would shed light on this.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has given a full picture of how this group of Spanish male participants from Andalusia behaves on FB with respect to receiving compliments, and how other Spanish men in their FB network give compliments. The majority of compliments that the Spanish men participating in this study received pertained to their appearance, though there were other topics such as ability and personality, which received a respectable number of compliments. When the Spanish male participants here responded to compliments, they were most likely to accept the compliment. That said, more often than not, Spanish men did not respond to compliments in any way 76% of the time.

Spanish men used supportive elements frequently both in giving and receiving compliments, though they used supportive elements slightly more frequently when responding to compliments. When giving compliments, Spanish men preferred to use textual alteration and repeated punctuation. When responding to compliments, however, their preference shifted to use of emoticons and FB's 'like' function. These two supportive elements are unique to the digital realm, and 'like' is specific to FB.

In the next chapter I compare and contrast the most salient points of Chapters 4 and 5, calling upon other similar studies on compliments and compliment responses in EcSp and PenSp in order to give the results of the current study further context. I first focus on the differences and similarities in the basic elements of compliment studies, including compliment topics, syntactic

patterns, and compliment responses. After fully discussing those points, I will turn to a discussion of the use of supportive elements by the two groups. The aim of this is twofold: both to gain an understanding of how Ecuadorian and Spanish men use supportive elements in compliments and compliment responses, and also to try obtain a clearer picture of male talk and male behavior on FB, through the lens of variational pragmatics.

Chapter 6

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ECUADORIAN AND SPANISH COMPLIMENTS

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 discusses compliment and compliment response behavior by Ecuadorian men on FB, and Chapter 5 does the same with respect to Spanish men. This chapter is a contrastive analysis of compliment behavior on FB by these two groups of men.

When men are considered in studies on compliments, it is in a mixed sex context, both in giving and receiving compliments. Past studies promote the idea that men do not compliment as often as women, and men particularly do not compliment each other, least of all with respect to appearance (see Chapter 2). The results of the current study demonstrate that this is not true, neither for Ecuadorian nor Spanish men. What is true is that while Ecuadorian and Spanish men do not seem to engage in as much complimenting behavior as their female counterparts, they are worth studying because many of the results for compliments among men differ significantly to those for women.

In this chapter, I first give a broad overview of the results of compliments for the two groups of participants, presenting the results at a high level in order to give a broad idea of how the two groups of men complimented each other (Section 6.2). Topics of compliments are the starting point for discussion, with the remainder of the chapter examining other aspects of compliments, such as syntactic patterns and supportive elements, while referencing the topics of compliments that these other elements occur alongside. In short, topics of compliments serve as the base to the many layers of elements involved in

compliments. Also in Section 6.2, I apply Herbert's (1990) idea of compliments being framed in either a first, second, or third person perspective and how this notion relates to the compliment behavior observed among Ecuadorian and Spanish men on FB.

Section 6.3 compares the results of the data for compliment topics from the Ecuadorian and Spanish participants, beginning with compliments on appearance, and incorporating all elements of compliments with respect to each topic, including syntactic patterns and supportive elements, the latter of which are discussed in conjunction with Herbert's (1990) idea of focus of compliments (Sections 6.3.1-6.3.5). Section 6.4 discusses the use of 'like' as a compliment, rather than its role as a supportive element.

6.2 Broad overview of compliment results

Chapters 4 and 5 first presented the results of male-male compliments in relation to female participants from the current study in order to show how the results compare to other compliment studies, which primarily focused on women (refer to Chapters 4 and 5 for detailed results for each group of participants). The results from Tables 4.1 and 5.1 are condensed in Table 6.1 and give a side-by-side comparison of compliments and comments received by the two groups participants from both male and female FB friends.

Table 6. 1 Overview of male vs. female compliments

	Total photos w/comments	Total comments		Total photos w/ comps		Total compliments	
		M	F	M	F	M	F
Ecuadorian male participants	2,939	15,169		1,105		2,033	
		9,512	5,657	420	824	524	1,510
Spanish male participants	1,931	7,115		613		891	
		3,800	3,315	180	497	212	679

TOTAL	4,868	22,284		1,718		2,924	
		13,312	8,972	600	1,321	736	2,189

Table 6.1 shows that, overall, the Ecuadorian participants had approximately 1.5 times as many photos with comments in the study than did the Spanish participants, though the number of participants in both groups was approximately equal. This multiplier did not extend to other metrics, such as comments overall and compliments: the Ecuadorian men had twice as many or more comments and compliments than the Spanish men. For example, the Spanish participants received 212 compliments from other men, while the Ecuadorian participants received 524 compliments from men, nearly 2.5 times as many as the Spanish participants, demonstrating that despite having ample opportunities to engage in more complimenting behavior, Spanish men choose not to.

When viewing the data in Table 6.1 from a slightly different angle, it shows that Ecuadorian and Spanish men behave identically in terms of how often they compliment their male FB friends: Ecuadorian men gave 9,512 comments, but only 5.5% were compliments, and 5.6% of the Spanish male comments were compliments. This perspective is important because it sets the tone for the study results overall: despite variations in details of compliment and compliment response behavior, Ecuadorian and Spanish men use compliments with similar frequencies.

Focusing on topics of compliments, Table 6.2 condenses the information provided in Tables 4.2 and 5.2 to give a side-by-side comparison of the topics of compliments given by Ecuadorian and Spanish men.

Table 6. 2 Compliments to participants, by category

	Appearance	Possessions	Ability	Personality	Friendship	Child	Pets	Total
Ecuador	150	16	187	99	54	9	9	524
Spain	134	2	48	19	6	2	1	212
TOTAL	284	18	235	118	60	11	10	736

As shown in Table 6.2, the most common topic of compliment differed between the two groups: ability was the most common compliment topic for the Ecuadorian participants and appearance occurred most for the Spanish participants. This is the first point of divergence between the two groups, though as highlighted in Chapter 4, ability as the most frequent topic of compliment among the Ecuadorian participants was due to one user (EM26). In this chapter, I discuss topics of compliments in the same order as Chapters 4 and 5.

6.2.1 Application of Herbert (1990) to results

Although Herbert (1990) does not suggest a framework *per se* for classifying and analyzing compliments, he provides a useful strategy for conceptualizing male-male compliments, theorizing that men are impersonal when giving compliments (p. 205). Herbert (1990:203) gives the following examples of varying degrees of personal focus of compliments, the first being the highest degree of personal focus and the last having the lowest degree of personal focus (see Chapter 2.3.1.1.3). The following compliments give examples in Spanish (not from the current study) that constitute translations of Herbert's (1990:203) examples.

First person focus: I like your hair that way. (*Me encanta tu pelo así.*)

Second person focus: You look good with short hair. (*Te ves bien con el pelo corto.*)

Third person focus: Nice haircut. (*Bonito peinado.*)

In order to see whether Ecuadorian and Spanish men choose a less personal focus in formulating their compliments, compliments were classified into first, second, or third person focus. One way to do this is to classify syntactic patterns found in this study as being first, second, or third person focused. However, due to the potential for variation within any given pattern, this is not a reliable method for determining the focus of a compliment. Implicit and ‘other’ compliments that do not fit within an established category are particularly flexible and can come from any focus. Table 6.3 instead shows the results of examining each compliment produced in the current study on a case-by-case individual basis and determining where the focus of the compliment lies: first, second, or third person.

Table 6. 3 Focus of all compliments, by category

	Personal focus	Appearance	Possessions	Ability	Personality	Friendship	Children	Pets	Total
Ecuador	1	1	-	13	2	9	-	-	25 5%
	2	11	-	7	13	1	-	-	32 6%
	3	138	16	167	84	44	9	9	467 89%
Spain	1	22	2	6	4	3	1	-	38 18%
	2	28	-	2	3	1	-	-	34 16%
	3	84	-	40	12	2	1	1	140 66%

Table 6.3 confirms the notion that Ecuadorian and Spanish men gravitate towards using less personally focused forms when giving compliments to other men. This gives the impression that these men are aloof and prefer to maintain a degree of distance when complimenting. This point would benefit from further

exploration and a comparison with female complimenting behavior in order to discover whether limited use of first-person focus is the same for women, or whether this is a male phenomenon only.

A further problem with classifying compliments based solely on the compliment's syntactic pattern, as pointed out by Herbert (1990:204), is that there is some ambiguity within each syntactic pattern such that one pattern can produce second or third person compliments, as in the following examples of the most commonly observed syntactic pattern for compliments in AmE by Manes and Wolfson (1980) and NZEng by Holmes (1988): NP is/looks (really) ADJ (Herbert 1990:203-4). Herbert suggests that this pattern covers both a second person compliment: "You're really gorgeous today!" and a third person compliment: "That coat is really great" (p. 204). This pattern corresponds to the following syntactic patterns in the current study:

(NP) + V (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV

V (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV (+NP)

V (+NP) (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV

In Spanish, these syntactic patterns can also cover first person compliments.

Example 6.1 gives examples from the data collected in the current study of first, second, and third person compliments using the patterns listed above.

Example 6. 1 First, second, and third person compliments in EcSp

First: *te veo bien* ('I see you looking good')

Second: *te ves bien en la foto* ('you look good in the photo')

Third: *Ta Güeno*. ('It's good')

Table 6.3 demonstrates a way in which one group, Ecuadorian men, behave according to expected norms of male behavior, i.e., giving few

compliments from a first-person focus. On the other hand, while the Spanish men preferred giving compliments from a third person focus overall, they also used a first person and second person focus with some regularity. The Spanish results across compliment categories are roughly similar to those found by Herbert (1990:205): men in Herbert's (1990) study gave other men compliments from a first person focus 15.4% of the time, 16.2% from a second person focus, and 68.4% from a third person focus.

Ecuadorian men were more extreme in their preference for third person focus compliments, using those 89% of the time overall and using first person focused compliments just 5% of the time. This is a recurring theme with the Ecuadorian men: behaving in an exaggeratedly masculine way, which is directly in conflict with other aspects of their behavior observed in the study. This idea is examined further as it surfaces repeatedly in the results in this chapter and in Chapters 4 and 7.

One element of personal focus that Herbert (1990) did not consider, but which comprises a substantial part of the analysis in the current study, is whether some form of supportive elements are used more frequently in conjunction with a less personal, third person focus, and what effect supportive elements have on the delivery and receipt of the compliment overall. The frequency of supportive elements for each degree of personal focus is listed in Table 6.4.

Table 6. 4 Use of supportive elements with all compliments

	Personal focus and number of each	Laughter	Emoticon	Form of address	<i>Abrazos</i>	Textual alteration	Repeated Punctuation	Love	No supportive element
Ecuador	1 (24)	6	0	10	0	8	10	1	6 (25%)
	2 (32)	13	1	16	0	10	14	0	8 (25%)
	3 (467)	134	5	164	7	168	219	1	83 (18%)
Spain	1 (38)	5	9	7	0	14	13	0	10 (26%)
	2 (34)	5	13	11	6	10	14	0	5 (15%)
	3 (140)	17	36	14	5	61	45	0	32 (23%)

In general, Ecuadorian and Spanish men used supportive elements infrequently with first person-focused compliments, slightly more in second person-focused compliments, and significantly more in third person-focused compliments.

Spanish men do not use forms of address much overall, while Ecuadorian men use them frequently, with many more instances in third person focus compliments, though proportionally, Ecuadorian men used forms of address more often in second person focus compliments. These results coincide with Placencia et al.'s (2015) findings, in which Ecuadorian men used nominal forms of address almost twice as often as Spanish men (p. 558). I expected a higher incidence of supportive elements in third person focus compliments from the Spanish men, as a way to make such compliments feel more personal while simultaneously maintaining distance.

Third person focus compliments are more ambiguous in nature; many take an elliptical form (e.g., *guapo*) with nothing further, thereby creating some uncertainty, which would lend itself to the inclusion of a form of address. As with Ecuadorian men, the proportion of forms of address used by Spanish men in appearance compliments was higher in second person focus than with third person focused compliments.

Table 6.4 highlights how Ecuadorian and Spanish do not fit neatly within expected patterns of compliment behavior. One would expect supportive elements to occur less in first person focused compliments, due to them being more personal in nature, with the quantity of supportive elements increasing as the level of personal focus decreases, and the data bears this out, for the most part. For Spanish men, however, this was not always the case: they used textual alteration more frequently in first person focused compliments than in second person focused compliments, and they used hugs or kisses more frequently in second person focus compliments than in third person focus compliments. Spanish men also used repeated punctuation almost equally across first and second person compliments, with the quantity nearly tripling for third person focus compliments.

The increase in supportive elements between second and third person-focus compliments by Ecuadorian men was more dramatic than that observed in Spanish men. In the supportive element categories of laughter, emoticons, and punctuation, Spanish men used three times more supportive elements in third person focused compliments than in second person focused compliments. Ecuadorian men, on the other hand, used laughter and forms of address ten times more frequently in third person focus compliments than in second person

focus, and deployed textual alteration and repeated punctuation 15 and 16 times more, respectively, than Spanish men in third person focus compliments than in second person focus. This jump in frequency of use of supportive elements between second- and third-person focus compliments reiterates how Ecuadorian men appear to play to a hyper masculine stereotype: use of supportive elements is more acceptable at a distance.

In the next section, I compare the results of compliment topics as used by the two groups of participants. Discussion of each topic includes Herbert's (1990) notion of compliment focus, which I frame in terms of supportive elements in order to see whether the use of supportive elements in each category of compliment increases as the personal focus of compliments decreases.

6.3 Discussion of compliment topics and syntactic patterns

There is a good deal of research on compliments and the topics that most frequently receive compliments (see Chapter 2). By and large, the vast majority of past research, both in face-to-face contexts and in online environments, indicates that physical appearance overwhelmingly accounts for the substance of compliments across languages and cultures, including both EcSp and PenSp. The Spanish participants upheld previous research findings: 63% of all compliments given by Spanish men focused on appearance. As discussed in Chapter 4, Ecuadorian men gave compliments relating to ability most frequently, with the large caveat of participant EM26 and his unusually large number of photographs on FB of his art, which received the majority of compliments on ability. EM26 may not receive so many compliments on his tattoo work in face-to-face settings;

such work is typically not on display in the same way that he has been able to show it on FB, which illustrates that while FB is a highly visual medium that lends itself to compliments on appearance, the case of EM26 demonstrates that there is plenty of scope for other topics of compliments.

In the next sections, I compare appearance compliments first, followed by compliments on ability, personality, friendship, and finally possessions, children and pets. I examine syntactic patterns used by the Ecuadorian and Spanish men in conjunction with each compliment category rather than separately (as in Chapters 4 and 5), with particular focus on lexical elements used in compliments and implicit forms of compliments. In addition to compliment topics and syntactic patterns, I refer to Herbert’s (1990) study and his categorization of male compliments as having either a first, second, or third person-focus. I analyze supportive elements in conjunction with each compliment topic, syntactic pattern, and focus of compliments in order to determine how they fit in, and what role they play in the realization of male compliments on FB.

6.3.1 Appearance

Appearance compliments occurred most in both the Spanish and in the Ecuadorian corpus, when EM26 is excluded from analysis. As a starting point of comparison, Table 6.5 lists each participant in each group, and how many compliments each received in total, and how many of those were compliments related to appearance.

Table 6. 5 Appearance compliments to Ecuadorian and Spanish men

	Total compliments	Appearance compliments		Total compliments	Appearance compliments
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EM1	41	7 (17%)	SM1	3	3 (100%)
EM2	25	9 (36%)	SM2	QUIT STUDY	
EM3	QUIT STUDY		SM3	EXCLUDED	
EM4	0	0	SM4	NO PHOTOS	
EM5	NO PHOTOS		SM5	1	1 (100%)
EM6	NO PHOTOS		SM6	1	1 (100%)
EM7	13	7 (54%)	SM7	1	1 (100%)
EM8	1	0	SM8	4	1 (25%)
EM9	13	2 (15%)	SM9	NO PHOTOS	
EM10	5	4 (80%)	SM10	9	4 (44%)
EM11	26	11 (42%)	SM11	22	17 (77%)
EM12	3	0	SM12	2	0
EM13	8	1 (13%)	SM13	11	3 (27%)
EM14	7	1 (14%)	SM14	0	0
EM15	22	12 (55%)	SM15	9	8 (89%)
EM16	12	3 (25%)	SM16	13	6 (46%)
EM17	24	2 (8%)	SM17	0	0
EM18	65	29 (45%)	SM18	0	0
EM19	9	3 (33%)	SM19	5	4 (80%)
EM20	11	3 (27%)	SM20	1	1 (100%)
EM21	EXCLUDED		SM21	1	1 (100%)
EM22	EXCLUDED		SM22	81	64 (79%)
EM23	EXCLUDED		SM23	NO PHOTOS	
EM24	3	2 (67%)	SM24	0	0
EM25	0	0	SM25	1	0
EM26	176	40 (23%)	SM26	3	2 (67%)
EM27	2	1 (50%)	SM27	EXCLUDED	
EM28	3	0	SM28	7	3 (43%)
EM29	6	4 (67%)	SM29	0	0
EM30	6	0	SM30	EXCLUDED	
EM31	28	4 (14%)	SM31	20	4 (20%)
EM32	15	5 (33%)	SM32	6	3 (50%)
			SM33	1	1 (100%)
			SM34	10	6 (60%)
Total	524	150 (29%)	Total	212	134 (63%)

Table 6.5 looks completely random in the information that it presents: some men receive many compliments on appearance, some receive a few, and some receive none. I have noted the percentage of compliments given to each participant on appearance, which provides a clearer comparison between the two groups with respect to how compliments on appearance are distributed.

Typically, individual Ecuadorian men did not receive a high proportion of compliments on appearance; for the majority, compliments on appearance made up less than half of the total compliments that they received. The opposite was true of the Spanish participants: just over half of Spanish participants received the majority of their compliments on appearance. The Spanish results may be slightly misleading, however, as there were several users who only received one compliment total, and that one compliment focused on appearance. Whether that skews the data or is actually more representative of Spanish male behavior is debatable: previous studies suggest that men simply do not compliment each other, and when they do, compliments are largely focused on ability, and given in goal-oriented settings (Rees-Miller, 2011). The Spanish results indicate that men are concerned with appearance and compliment each other on it, though this could be a result of the medium of FB, which facilitates giving compliments on appearance, bearing in mind EM26, who received more compliments on ability than any other topic.

The loose trend among Spanish men was that the fewer compliments they received, the more likely they were to have a high proportion of appearance compliments. This trend barely followed into the Ecuadorian group, which demonstrated that a small number of compliments overall was most likely to produce a low proportion of compliments on appearance.

Table 6.5 shows that in general, Ecuadorian men demonstrated a lower propensity towards complimenting the appearance of their male friends on FB than Spanish men, evidenced both by the overall proportion of compliments on appearance and individual proportions of compliments on appearance. The simplest explanation is that Spanish men gave more compliments on appearance

because it is the most obvious topic on which to give a compliment on FB, an idea also applicable to Ecuadorian men, with EM26 as an outlier. Bearing in mind that results of previous studies suggest that men give few to no compliments on appearance to other men, Spanish men appear to be unique in this respect.

The results of Table 6.5 indicate a difference in Ecuadorian and Spanish male compliment behavior: Spanish men appear to favor a more classically formulaic approach to compliments on FB by giving the majority of compliments on appearance. This expectation, however, is based on previous studies of compliments focused on females, where compliments on appearance typically dominate (see Placencia and Yépez Lasso, 1999). Men should not be expected to behave in the same way as women, and the results of the current study indicate that they do not. The results here defy expectations of compliment behavior on FB in nearly every way: men are not expected to give compliments on appearance to men, and the majority of compliments given by Spanish men focus on appearance. The majority of compliments among Ecuadorian men focus on ability, but these compliments on ability do not occur in a goal-oriented setting (see Rees-Miller, 2011).

Despite the tendency of Spanish men to favor compliments on appearance, the proportion of these compliments as compared to other topics is not as large as that observed in other studies of compliments on FB (see Placencia and Lower 2013: 637), or even in face-to-face settings (Placencia and Yépez Lasso, 1999). This suggests that despite following the general preference observed in previous research for giving compliments on appearance, Spanish men focus on appearance to a lesser degree than women do, even in the context of FB. This could be explained by the choice of methodology in the current study,

though it was based on the methodology deployed by Placencia and Lower (2013), which produced results closely in line previous studies on compliments in terms of the high number of compliments on appearance (p. 637).

Both groups of men frequently used syntactic patterns that relied on adjectives to express compliments on appearance, though Spanish men favored implicit compliments most heavily when complimenting appearance. Table 6.6 presents the syntactic patterns used by the two groups with respect to compliments on appearance.

Table 6. 6 Comparison of syntactic patterns in appearance compliments

Syntactic pattern	Code	Ecuadorian men	Spanish men
(NP) + V(+Intens) + ADJ/ADV	A	-	-
V (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV (+NP)	B	12 (8%)	13 (10%)
V (+NP) (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV	C	-	1 (.8%)
(Interj) + (qué) + ADJ/ADV (+Poss + NP)	D	1 (.7%)	3 (2%)
(Interj) + (qué) + ADJ/ADV (+que + V)	E	2 (1%)	9 (7%)
Qué (+ADJ) + NP (+que + V)	F	14 (9%)	4 (3%)
(Intens) + ADJ/ADV	G	42 (28%)	26 (19%)
Cómo + V	H	-	-
NP + gustar/fascinar/encantar	I	-	11 (8%)
Implicit compliment	J	10 (7%)	28 (21%)
NP	L	9 (6%)	3 (2%)
Qué + NP + tan/más + ADJ	O	-	2 (1%)
NP + ADJ/ADV	P	6 (4%)	4 (3%)
Other	Q	4 (3%)	7 (5%)
Qué + ADJ/ADV	R	13 (9%)	17 (13%)
ADJ/ADV + NP	S	35 (23%)	4 (3%)
Tan...como	T	-	-
ADJ/ADV + V (+NP)	U	2 (1.3%)	-
V + NP	V	-	2 (1%)
TOTAL		150	134

Table 6.6 takes the notion of Spanish men being formulaic in their compliment behavior and turns it on its head for a number of reasons, the first being that the most favored syntactic pattern used to give compliments on appearance by Spanish men was that of implicit compliments. This “pattern” was not heavily favored however: Spanish men used categories G and J almost

equally in appearance compliments. Overall, the picture this paints of Spanish male behavior on FB is that while Spanish men gravitate towards compliments on appearance, which is the most expected topic based on previous compliment studies, Spanish men realize appearance compliments in a number of ways, the majority of the time in more creative or implicit ways. Additionally, Spanish men used a slightly larger variety of syntactic patterns than did Ecuadorian men; one in particular, category I, was used relatively frequently by Spanish men but not at all by Ecuadorian men. This was a surprising result, as this syntactic pattern (I) was observed by Placencia and Yépez Lasso in Ecuadorian compliments, albeit infrequently (1999:105).

The impression of Ecuadorian men is slightly different: Table 6.6 shows that Ecuadorian men gravitated towards categories G and S when complimenting the appearance of other men, the two categories that rely almost exclusively on the use of an adjective. This indicates a certain degree of formulaicity in complimenting appearance. Unlike Ecuadorian men, Spanish men rarely used pattern S. In order to gain a deeper insight into whether Ecuadorian men are highly formulaic in their approach to appearance compliments, Table 6.7 presents a comparison of the adjectives used by Ecuadorian and Spanish men in appearance compliments.

Table 6. 7 Adjectives and adjectival phrases in appearance compliments

Adjective	Ecuadorian men	Spanish men
<i>Artístico</i> ('artistic')	-	1
<i>Bacán</i> ('cool')	13	-
<i>Belleza</i> ('beauty')	2	-
<i>Bonito</i> ('pretty')	5	7
<i>Brutal</i> ('brutal')	1	1
<i>Bueno</i> ('good')	27	11
<i>Chévere</i> ('cool')	13	-
<i>Chula</i> ('cool')	-	2

<i>Del putas</i> ('amazing')	4	-
<i>Dominado</i> ('dominated')	1	-
<i>Elegante</i> ('elegant')	6	1
<i>Espectacular</i> ('spectacular')	1	-
<i>Excelente</i> ('excellent')	3	-
<i>Fresco</i> ('fresh')	2	-
<i>Genial</i> ('good')	1	1
<i>Grande</i> ('grand')	1	1
<i>Guapo</i> ('handsome')	5	43
<i>Hermoso</i> ('pretty')	4	1
<i>Impresionante</i> ('amazing')	-	1
<i>Increíble</i> ('incredible')	1	-
<i>Linda</i> ('pretty')	8	2
<i>Mono</i> ('cute')	1	-
<i>Morenito</i> ('tanned guy')	-	1
<i>Sexy</i> ('sexy')	2	4
<i>Simpático</i> ('nice')	1	-

Table 6.7 shows that Ecuadorian men used a wider variety of adjectives than the Spanish men, who overwhelmingly favored one adjective above all others: *guapo*. Ecuadorian men favored *bueno* and the adverb *bien* ('good') (see Chapter 4), which are basic and non-committal, as far as positive evaluations go. Whether this indicates a general reluctance on the part of Ecuadorian men to show overt affection towards each other with respect to appearance, or simply a tendency to compliment in a formulaic manner is subject to debate. Spanish men, through their frequent use of the unequivocal adjective *guapo* for compliments on appearance, have demonstrated less fear of using affectionate terms, but at the same time, have been highly formulaic in their word choice.

Both the Ecuadorian and Spanish men seem to simultaneously occupy conflicting spheres. The Spanish men give the impression of being creative in their expression of compliments on appearance by most favoring use of implicit compliments, but at the same time rely heavily on one adjective for realizing those compliments. Ecuadorian men used syntactic patterns that rely almost

entirely on adjectives to express a positive message, yet they deployed a larger range of adjectives when giving compliments on appearance.

There are other, smaller, differences that Table 6.7 highlights; specifically, that word choice varies considerably between the two groups. Two notable examples are the adjectives *bacán* and *chévere*: these were used frequently by the Ecuadorian men, but not used at all by the Spanish men. On the other hand, Spanish men used *chula* while Ecuadorian men did not. It is particularly interesting that this word, meaning ‘cool,’ is the one with the starkest difference in usage, as it is a word typically used by young people and among friends to express approval. Young people choose to use the most current, up to date word, which varies depending on location.

An interesting difference between the two groups of men in word use and syntactic choice crystalizes in syntactic pattern S: ADJ/ADV + NP. As Table 6.6 shows, this pattern was the second most frequently used by Ecuadorian men to compliment appearance, while the Spanish men barely used it. As discussed in Chapter 2, this pattern accounted for the majority of compliments in Placencia and Yépez Lasso’s (1999) study on Ecuadorian compliments (p. 105). In Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez’s (2013) contrastive study of compliments in EcSp and PenSp, a form of compliment similar to pattern S made up the majority of compliments on appearance in PenSp (p. 115). However, there were several other syntactic patterns included there as well, which may aid in explaining the disparity in the results for the Spanish men here, and the Spanish women in Placencia and Fuentes Rodríguez’s (2013) study.

When Ecuadorian men use the adverb *bien*, the construction is highly formulaic in that a small group of nouns are used in conjunction with *bien*: *la*

foto/pic ('the photo'), *el photoshow* ('the photoshow'), and *ese man* ('that guy').

The Spanish participants did not use syntactic pattern S much, and when they used it, they did not use *bien*. A comparison between the two groups shows an emerging pattern, which is set out in Table 6.8.

Table 6. 8 Comparison in use of syntactic pattern S

Ecuadorian men	Spanish men
<i>bonita esa foto</i> ('pretty this photo')	<i>Bonita foto</i> ('Pretty photo')
<i>Buena foto...</i> ('Good photo')	<i>buenos hermanos</i> ('good brothers')
<i>vakan esa foto</i> ('cool this photo')	<i>muy buena esta foto!</i> ('very good this photo!')
<i>eselente esa foto!!</i> ('excellent this photo')	<i>Guapa mi gente!</i> ('Handsome my people')
<i>chevere la fotico</i> ('cool this little photo')	

Table 6.8 demonstrates that within their frequent use of syntactic pattern S for complimenting appearance, Ecuadorian men were quite formulaic in how they used the pattern. The majority of the time, Ecuadorian men used an adjective in conjunction with *la foto* or some synonym for photo. Thus, despite some variation in the adjective selected for realizing a compliment with pattern S, Ecuadorian were limited in how they accomplished this overall. The Spanish group only used pattern S in four instances, and half of the examples use *la foto* as the noun, as the Ecuadorian men. To get a better idea of how formulaic pattern (S) is as used by Ecuadorian men, Table 6.9 shows the proportion of compliments on appearance using pattern S that use *la foto* or some variant and the corresponding adjective.

Table 6. 9 Category S, deconstructed (Ecuadorian men)

ADJ/ADV	<i>La foto</i>
<i>Bacán</i>	4 (100%)
<i>Bien</i>	7 (78%)
<i>Bonito</i>	1 (50%)
<i>Bueno</i>	9 (82%)
<i>Chévere</i>	4 (100%)
<i>Del putas</i>	1 (100%)
<i>Excelente</i>	1 (100%)

<i>Grande</i>	1 (100%)
<i>Lindo</i>	1 (50%)
Total	29

Table 6.9 shows clearly that within use of syntactic pattern S for complimenting appearance on FB, Ecuadorian men are highly formulaic in their construction of such compliments, using *la foto* in the majority of instances.

The results of this study do not support the assertion that Ecuadorian and Spanish men are always highly formulaic when complimenting on FB overall. What this study does show is that there are some aspects of compliments on FB that are indeed highly formulaic: *buena foto* ('nice pic') and variants being an example of this. While Spanish men used pattern S in a similar way to Ecuadorian men, they did so infrequently, instead preferring implicit compliments to accomplish compliments on appearance and therefore, in this aspect at least, Spanish men do not behave in a formulaic, expected way.

In order to gain a better perspective and to see more clearly how the two groups differ, I next set out a number of comparative examples. Selected examples have other similarities apart from pertaining to appearance (i.e., the same syntactic pattern or use of the same adjective) and compare how men from the two groups express compliments on appearance. The photos chosen are not similar in composition, but the compliments on the photos are.

In Example 6.2, the word *bonito* is used as a point of comparison because it is an adjective that occurs approximately equally in the two groups in compliments on appearance.

Example 6. 2 Use of *bonito* in compliments on appearance

Ecuadorian men	Pattern	Spanish men
<i>q bonito guambra</i>	R	<i>Q bonito [name]!!!!!! :D</i>

('how pretty guy')		('How pretty [name]!!!!!! :D')
<i>bonita esa foto</i>	S	<i>Bonita foto</i>
('pretty photo')		('Pretty photo')
<i>bonitos los chicos!!!! Un abrazo enorme EM26!!!</i>	S	
('pretty guys!!!! A big hug EM26!!!')		

Example 6.2 shows that when it comes to the use of *bonito* in compliments on appearance, Spanish and Ecuadorian men used the word in a similar way in syntactic patterns R and S. However, Spanish men also used *bonito* in syntactic patterns F, G, and P, while Ecuadorian men used *bonito* exclusively in patterns R and S. Both groups used forms of address in conjunction with pattern R.

A more illuminating point of comparison is shown in the use of implicit compliments, which were used most often by Spanish men in compliments on appearance on FB (21% versus 7% by Ecuadorian men). Example 6.3 shows a side-by-side comparison of implicit compliments on appearance by the two groups of men.

Example 6. 3 Implicit compliments on appearance

	Ecuadorian men		Spanish men
(a)	<i>esheeee man con nuevo loook bien ahi jajajaja espero que estes bien loquito</i> (‘that man with a new look good here ha ha I hope you’re well buddy’)	(b)	<i>Vaya pedazo de modelo =D Un abrazooooooooo chiquillooooooooooooo</i> (‘What a hunk of a model =D A huuuuug little guuuuuuuy’)
(c)	<i>VE.. EL NAUFRAGO(EM18) ..QUE BUENA PELÍCULA NO SABIA QUE TÚ LO HICISTE</i> (‘HEY.. THE SHIPWRECK [Castaway] (EM18)	(d)	<i>... y la portada de su nuevo album "Come back to me" ahora disponible sólo en Spotify premium</i> (‘...and the cover of his new album “Come back to

	..WHAT A GOOD MOVIE I DIDN'T KNOW THAT YOU MADE IT')		me" now available only on Spotify premium')
(e)	<i>ahi tu no pareces turista sino guía ..esa pinta de gringo que tienes jejeje</i> (‘you don’t look like a tourist here but a guide ..this gringo appearance that you have ha ha ha’)	(f)	<i>a ese tio tan duro lo he visto en bata desayunando y con zapatillas de abuelo</i> (‘I’ve seen this hard man in his robe and old man slippers having breakfast’)
(g)	<i>Mmm!</i> (‘mmm!’)	(h)	<i>ñam ñam</i> (‘yum yum’)

The implicit compliments samples in Example 6.3 are less different than expected, though I chose examples that were approximately similar in content in order to get an idea of how the two groups express implicit compliments on appearance. In Example 6.3(a), a man comments on his friend’s new look, and follows this with an expression of well wishes, along with a form of address. In Example 6.3(b), the compliment likens the recipient to a model and follows this with an expression of well wishes and a form of address. Example 6.3(c) and (d) use comparison to someone or something famous in order to realize a compliment. Example 6.3(c) likens the recipient to Tom Hanks in the movie “Castaway,” while Example 6.3(d) is more general in that the recipient’s photo resembles that of a pop star’s album cover.

Examples 6.3(e) and (f) use humor in order to convey that the compliment recipient looks good. In Example 6.3(e), the compliment recipient is likened to a tour guide, despite his *gringo* appearance. Example 6.3(f) pokes fun at the recipient, who is practicing martial arts in the photo in question, by labeling him as a tough guy, but then offering the counterpoint that he wears a robe and old man slippers when having breakfast.

The last compliment sample in Example 6.3 is a straightforward example of likening compliment recipients to food: *Mmm!* and *ñam ñam*. These two compliments, despite being from two different cohorts of men from different countries, are for all intents and purposes, the same. They use the same method to express an implied compliment on appearance: likening the recipient to appealing food. Although the words used are different, the result and intention are identical.

Turning the analysis of appearance compliments to Herbert's (1990) notion of personal focus of compliments, Table 6.10 shows that supportive elements on appearance compliments were used in roughly the same proportions to compliments in general, as seen in Section 6.2.1, Table 6.4.

Table 6. 10 Use of supportive elements with appearance compliments

	Personal focus and number of each	Laughter	Emoticon	Form of address	<i>Abrazos</i>	Textual alteration	Repeated Punctuation	Love	No supportive element
Ecu.	1 (1)	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
	2 (11)	5	0	5	0	5	5	0	3 (27%)
	3 (138)	48	2	46	2	56	67	1	21 (15%)
Spain	1 (22)	3	5	4	0	10	1	0	5 (23%)
	2 (28)	4	12	9	5	7	12	0	4 (14%)
	3 (84)	9	25	8	3	38	38	0	16 (19%)

Table 6.10 highlights that third person focus compliments were most favored by both Ecuadorian and Spanish men, with first-person focus compliments being dis-preferred, particularly among Ecuadorian men, who only gave one appearance compliment from a first-person perspective. This is quite striking, especially in comparison to the Spanish data, in which the proportions of first- and second person focus compliments on appearance are similar: 16.4%

and 21%, respectively. The Ecuadorian behavior is more extreme in terms of preference for third person focused compliments as opposed to first or second person focus compliments, as was the trend for Ecuadorian male compliments overall, as seen in Section 6.2.1.

The Ecuadorian male reluctance to use first- or second person focus compliments did not carry over into use of supportive elements, however. The one first-person focus compliment on appearance by an Ecuadorian man contained two supportive elements: a form of address and repeated punctuation. The Ecuadorian men used supportive elements slightly more frequently in third person focused compliments than did Spanish men (85% versus 81%).

The scenario was slightly different in second person focus compliments on appearance: Ecuadorian men used supportive elements 73% of the time, while Spanish men used them in 86% of instances. This shows that, despite the overall reluctance to give an overtly affectionate compliment on another man's appearance, Ecuadorian men are not incapable of adding extra affect to a compliment that is already from a more personal perspective. Although Spanish men used first person focused compliments on appearance fairly frequently, nearly a quarter of those contained no supportive element at all, in contrast to the Ecuadorian men. That said, there was only one example of a first-person focus compliment in the Ecuadorian appearance data, and many more (22) in the Spanish data.

There are a few surprises in the data presented in Table 6.10, one being that Spanish men used textual alteration as a supportive element more often in first person focused compliments on appearance than in second person focus, and used hugs and kisses and forms of address more in second person than third

person focus compliments on appearance. This goes against the general pattern observed for both Ecuadorian and Spanish men in that the highest number of supportive elements in each category occurred in third person focus compliments. There does not seem to be any commonality in textual alteration, hugs and kisses, and forms of address that would contribute to an explanation of why these particular supportive elements do not follow the general pattern. It may simply be a matter of individual preference and that a larger trend would emerge with more data. Indeed, there are a few more instances of Ecuadorian compliments than Spanish compliments on appearance, and all of those follow the trend of the highest number of supportive elements occurring in third person focus compliments, and steadily decreasing as the focus of compliments gets more personal.

A possible explanation of the extreme reluctance of Ecuadorian men to give more personally focused compliments on appearance is what seemed to be an openly negative attitude towards homosexuality and frequent displays of masculinity on FB, neither of which were present in the Spanish corpus (see Section 4.2.2). The Ecuadorian participants and their male friends made frequent derogatory remarks towards each other about being gay, which could be a reflection of the society's attitude to masculinity and how that translates into how men realize compliments towards each other. Some samples of the Ecuadorian men referring to each other as homosexuals in a derogatory context are listed below in Example 6.4.

Example 6. 4 Ecuadorian derogatory comments on homosexuality

(a) Photo of two men

que bonita pareja ('what a pretty couple')

(b) Photo of three men, with arms around each other

parecen los Jonas brother...ja ja osea gays ('you look like the Jonas brothers...haha in other words gay')

Clearly the comments in Example 6.4 are not compliments, though I do not believe that they are hate speech, but rather a reflection of male banter or teasing, also referred to mock impoliteness, defined superficially impolite but not intended to cause offense, and understood as such (Maíz-Arévalo 2015:289). The reason for highlighting it here is that the prevalence of such comments within the Ecuadorian corpus could be explained by a desire to appear more masculine, as to eliminate any doubt of the commenter's sexuality. This idea seems to be reflected in the complimenting behavior of Ecuadorian men generally: very few compliments come from a first- or second-person perspective. The majority of male compliments are from an impersonal, third person perspective.

The Ecuadorian men are less personal in their focus of compliments towards other men than are Spanish men. This is perhaps most stark in the data for compliments on appearance, in which Ecuadorian men only gave one compliment with first person focus. That said, the fact that the Ecuadorian men gave the majority of compliments on appearance (with EM26 excluded) demonstrates that while there is a good deal of posturing with respect to displaying masculinity, Ecuadorian men are not afraid to show appreciation for another man's appearance, but the requirement seems to be that it be expressed in a less personal way.

The notion that male-male appearance compliments are acceptable among young Ecuadorian men, but from a distance, is reflected to an extent in the use of supportive elements in compliments on appearance, though the fact

that Ecuadorian men used supportive elements such as *besos* or *abrazos*, or expressing love, shows that they are able to express affection towards each other. Perhaps making jokes about homosexuality is a routine part of young Ecuadorian male language, a formulaic way to remind listeners (readers on FB) that the speaker is heterosexual.

6.3.2 Ability

Compliments on ability featured prominently in the Ecuadorian results; indeed, this was the most common topic of compliment for Ecuadorian men, largely due to EM26, as previously discussed. Ecuadorian and Spanish men complimented each other on various skills and abilities, with some overlapping topics between the two groups such as photography and artistic skills, and musical and cooking ability. There were a few compliments in the Spanish data that related to academic and sporting achievements, with similar facets of ability not present in the Ecuadorian corpus. Table 6.11 shows the number of ability compliments for each participant, in relation to total compliments received by each participant.

Table 6. 11 Compliments on ability to Ecuadorian and Spanish men

	Total compliments	Ability compliments		Total compliments	Ability compliments
EM1	41	7 (17%)	SM1	3	0
EM2	25	8 (32%)	SM2	QUIT STUDY	
EM3	QUIT STUDY		SM3	EXCLUDED	
EM4	0	0	SM4	NO PHOTOS	
EM5	NO PHOTOS		SM5	1	0
EM6	NO PHOTOS		SM6	1	0
EM7	13	0	SM7	1	0
EM8	1	0	SM8	4	2 (50%)
EM9	13	0	SM9	NO PHOTOS	
EM10	5	0	SM10	9	4 (44%)
EM11	26	1 (4%)	SM11	22	3 (14%)

EM12	3	0	SM12	2	1 (50%)
EM13	8	1 (13%)	SM13	11	5 (45%)
EM14	7	2 (29%)	SM14	0	0
EM15	22	2 (9%)	SM15	9	0
EM16	12	8 (67%)	SM16	13	5 (38%)
EM17	24	12 (50%)	SM17	0	0
EM18	65	12 (18%)	SM18	0	0
EM19	9	2 (22%)	SM19	5	0
EM20	11	1 (9%)	SM20	1	0
EM21	EXCLUDED		SM21	1	0
EM22	EXCLUDED		SM22	81	14 (17%)
EM23	EXCLUDED		SM23	NO PHOTOS	
EM24	3	0	SM24	0	0
EM25	0	0	SM25	1	0
EM26	176	124 (70%)	SM26	3	0
EM27	2	1 (50%)	SM27	EXCLUDED	
EM28	3	0	SM28	7	1 (14%)
EM29	6	1 (17%)	SM29	0	0
EM30	6	3 (50%)	SM30	EXCLUDED	
EM31	28	1 (4%)	SM31	20	8 (40%)
EM32	15	1 (7%)	SM32	6	1 (17%)
			SM33	1	0
			SM34	10	4 (40%)
Total	524	187 (36%)	Total	212	48 (23%)

Table 6.11 shows that, while ability was the most frequent topic of compliments among Ecuadorian men on FB, it was not the most common by a wide margin with appearance close behind at 29% of compliments (see Table 6.2). Contrast this to the results for Spanish men: Table 6.2 shows that appearance compliments featured 63% of the time, and compliments on ability occurred 23% of the time. This is a much larger difference, which demonstrates that Spanish men heavily favor compliments on appearance, while Ecuadorian men only slightly favor compliments on ability over appearance, and this is only due to EM26's high proportion of photos of his art.

More Ecuadorian men than Spanish men received compliments on ability: 17 versus 11, though seven of those Ecuadorian participants only received one compliment on ability. While fewer Spanish men overall received compliments

on ability there were only three Spanish participants that received a single compliment on ability. That is, 41.2% of Ecuadorian participants who received compliments on ability received only a single compliment, while only 28% of Spanish men received a single compliment on ability. It is important to keep these small nuances in mind when comparing the two groups. Although it would be accurate to say that a greater number of Ecuadorian men received compliments on ability, the small differences highlighted here show how these differences are not entirely straightforward. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 4, excluding EM26 makes a significant difference in the results, though in this study, with these particular participants, Ecuadorian men received compliments on ability the majority of the time. However, it is important to bear any caveats in mind when extrapolating the findings of the current study to Ecuadorian male behavior in general.

Rees-Miller (2011) argues that men give compliments most frequently on ability and in goal-oriented settings. The results of the current study show neither of these notions is true with respect to compliments among young Ecuadorian and Spanish men on FB. Facebook could hardly be considered a goal-oriented setting, at least not in a traditional sense. One could argue that maintaining friendships is a goal in itself, and therefore FB is a tool for achieving this goal. This is a bit tenuous, particularly given that FB does not require active participation from users, as would a soccer match, for example (see Li (2007) and Bernoff (2010), for a discussion of levels of participation on social-digital environments).

Although there are considerably fewer compliments on ability by Spanish men, it is useful to compare which syntactic patterns were used by both groups

in order to realize compliments on ability, and whether any patterns of use emerge. Table 6.12 shows the syntactic patterns used in compliments on ability by the two groups of men.

Table 6. 12 Syntactic patterns in compliments on ability

Syntactic pattern	Code	Ecuadorian men	Spanish men
(NP) + V(+Intens) + ADJ/ADV	A	1 (.5%)	3 (6%)
V (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV (+NP)	B	17 (9%)	4 (8%)
V (+NP) (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV	C	-	-
(Interj) + (qué) + ADJ/ADV (+Poss + NP)	D	1 (.5%)	1 (2%)
(Interj) + (qué) + ADJ/ADV (+que + V)	E	1 (.5%)	-
Qué (+ADJ) + NP (+que + V)	F	15 (8%)	2 (4%)
(Intens) + ADJ/ADV	G	56 (30%)	9 (19%)
Cómo + V	H	-	-
NP + gustar/fascinar/encantar	I	5 (3%)	5 (10%)
Implicit compliment	J	22 (12%)	5 (10%)
NP	L	15 (8%)	2 (4%)
Qué + NP + tan/más + ADJ	O	-	3 (6%)
NP + ADJ/ADV	P	1 (.5%)	4 (8%)
Other	Q	14 (7%)	4 (8%)
Qué + ADJ/ADV	R	14 (7%)	4 (8%)
ADJ/ADV + NP	S	23 (12%)	2 (4%)
Tan...como	T	-	-
ADJ/ADV + V (+NP)	U	2 (1%)	-
V + NP	V	-	-
TOTAL		187	48

Table 6.12 shows that both Ecuadorian and Spanish men favor the same syntactic pattern, G, when complimenting ability. The popularity of this pattern across categories has been discussed both in Chapters 4 and 5, so it is not surprising that within the category of ability, this compliment pattern is the most frequently used. What is slightly surprising about Table 6.12 is the popularity of pattern J, particularly among Ecuadorian men. Chapter 5 highlighted Spanish men's preference for this pattern when giving compliments on appearance. In complimenting ability, Spanish and Ecuadorian men use implicit compliments at nearly the same rate.

Table 6.12 demonstrates that while the precise order of preference for syntactic patterns differs between the Ecuadorian men and the Spanish men, both groups follow the same general pattern in their use of syntactic patterns for compliments on ability, which amounts to one clearly preferred syntactic pattern followed by a gradual decline of preference, with series of clusters. The most preferred pattern is identical for the two groups, but the order of the remaining patterns varies.

Further to the issue of syntactic patterns used in compliments on ability, the two groups of men frequently relied on adjectives when complimenting other men. Comparing the overall frequencies of various adjectives used by the two groups of men shows the similarities and differences in the adjectives favored by each group when complimenting ability.

Table 6. 13 Adjectives and adjectival phrases used in compliments on ability

Adjective/adjectival phrase	Ecuador	Spain
<i>alto</i> ('high')	1	-
<i>bacán</i> ('cool')	10	-
<i>bomba</i> ('bomb')	1	-
<i>bonito</i> ('pretty')	2	4
<i>bueno</i> ('good')	30	8
<i>chévere</i> ('cool')	6	-
<i>chulo</i> ('cool')	-	2
'classy'	1	-
<i>del putas</i> ('amazing')	16	-
<i>enorme</i> ('enormous')	-	1
<i>excelente</i> ('excellent')	9	-
<i>extremo</i> ('extreme')	1	-
<i>fabuloso</i> ('fabulous')	1	-
<i>fantástico</i> ('fantastic')	-	1
<i>genial</i> ('good')	9	2
'good'	1	-
<i>grande</i> ('grand')	1	3
<i>hermoso</i> ('pretty')	2	-
<i>impresionante</i> ('amazing')	-	1
<i>incredible</i> ('incredible')	2	-
<i>lindo</i> ('pretty')	2	-
<i>loco</i> ('crazy')	1	-

<i>lujo</i> ('luxury')	2	-
<i>magnifico</i> ('magnificent')	1	-
<i>maravilla</i> ('wonderful')	-	2
<i>ñami</i> ('yummy')	1	-
<i>orgásmico</i> ('orgasmic')	-	1
<i>padre</i> ('great')	1	-
<i>precioso</i> ('precious')	-	2
<i>rico</i> ('delicious')	2	1
<i>sádico</i> ('sadistic')	1	-
<i>sublime</i> ('sublime')	-	1
<i>súper</i> ('super')	1	-
<i>terrible</i> ('terrible')	-	1

Table 6.13 indicates that Ecuadorian men use adjectives in compliments on ability more than Spanish men, but when considering the overall proportion of use of adjectives in relation to the total number of compliments on ability, the two groups use adjectives at similar rates: 68% of ability compliments by Ecuadorian men use adjectives versus 62.5% by Spanish men. That said, Ecuadorian men used a wider range of adjectives than Spanish men, though both groups preferred to use the same adjective: *bueno*. Apart from *bueno* and *bonito*, the two groups did not overlap much in their use of adjectives, which is a surprising result, particularly given the wide range of adjectives used by the Ecuadorian men.

As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, the Ecuadorian men used *bien* ('good') frequently when complimenting, and while the Spanish men used *bien* in compliments as well, they did so to a much lesser degree than did the Ecuadorian men. The Ecuadorian men used *bien* frequently (23 times) when complimenting ability, and Spanish men did not use *bien* at all in compliments about ability. It is interesting that Spanish men did not use *bien* in compliments on ability; it is an adverb that is bland and particularly well suited to general compliments on

ability. Whether this is an indication of a tendency by Spanish men to be more thoughtful in their formulation of compliments on ability is unclear.

Table 6.14 compares a selection of similar compliments on ability by the two groups, using patterns J, B, and R because the two groups used those patterns with approximately equal frequencies in compliments on ability.

Table 6.14 Comparison of compliments on ability

Ecuadorian men	Pattern	Spanish men
<i>esta muy padree</i> (‘it is very cool’)	B	<i>es bueníiisima</i> (‘It is really good’)
<i>de los pocos diseños que me convensen</i> (‘one of the few designs that I like’)	J	<i>parece una pintura romantisista!</i> (‘it looks like a romanticist painting!’)
<i>que bien/vacan/chevere/genial/bonito</i> (‘how good/cool/cool/good/pretty’)	R	<i>qué chula/bonitou</i> (‘how cool/pretty’)

In the Ecuadorian data, there were 14 uses of pattern R for compliments on ability, and five of those used the construction, *que bien*, or some alternative spelling, to convey the compliment. There were no instances of the Spanish men using this construction in ability compliments, they instead used the adjective *chula*, and the alternative spelling of *bonito*, *bonitou*. Apart from some overlap in using their own terms for ‘cool’, and *bonito*, the two groups of men typically used pattern R differently with respect to compliments on ability.

Overall there were not many implicit compliments (J) on ability, and the two groups of men approached this type of compliment rather differently, as illustrated in Table 6.14. The Ecuadorian male compliment is directed at EM16’s photo of a poster he made to advertise a party he was DJ-ing. The male friend’s compliment is a bit of a backhanded indirect compliment, as it implies that other

poster designs by EM16 were not very good. An alternative view is that it is an example of mock impoliteness (see Mugford and Montes, 2020).

The Spanish indirect compliment in Table 6.14 is a bit more positive in nature, likening SM22's photograph of Seville to a romanticism-style painting. As with all implicit compliments, this compliment assumes that the recipient of this compliment will view such a comparison favorably. There was another frequent style of implicit compliment on ability in the Ecuadorian data, and that related to EM26 and his tattoo business. Example 6.5 shows some of these, which all compliment EM26 on his tattoo ability by saying that they (the man making the compliment) would like EM26 to give them a tattoo.

Example 6. 5 Implicit compliments directed towards EM26

- (a) *oye tápame un tattoo donde tatúas?* ('hey do a tattoo for me where do you do tattoos?')
- (b) *yo tb kiero un tattoo mi bro!!!* ('I also want a tattoo my bro!!!')
- (c) *algo así quiero brooooo!!!* ('I want one like that broooo!!!')

In some ways, these compliments on EM26's ability can be likened to compliments on possessions: the people giving the compliments are simultaneously praising EM26's artistic ability and asking him to share his talent. EM26's participation in the study changes the composition of compliments, particularly those on ability. There are 22 implicit compliments on ability in the Ecuadorian data, but only four of those are directed at other users besides EM26. This means that the pattern of complimenting a person's ability by asking them to perform their talent is not visible without EM26, at least in this data set.

Ecuadorian and Spanish men used supportive elements frequently in compliments on ability, illustrated in Table 6.15 in relation to focus of compliments (first, second, or third person).

Table 6. 15 Supportive elements vis-à-vis compliment focus (ability)

	Personal focus and number of each	Laughter	Emoticon	Form of address	<i>Abrazos</i>	Textual alteration	Repeated Punctuation	Love	No supportive element
Ecu.	1 (13)	3	0	4	0	4	4	0	6 (46%)
	2 (7)	1	0	3	0	1	2	0	3 (43%)
	3 (167)	22	1	73	2	56	83	0	34 (18%)
Spain	1 (6)	1	2	2	0	1	3	0	2 (33%)
	2 (2)	1	0	1	0	2	1	0	0
	3 (40)	4	10	4	1	19	11	0	9 (23%)

Table 6.15 shows a different view of Ecuadorian men and how they use supportive elements with respect to the focus of ability compliments as opposed to appearance compliments. Specifically, in compliments about appearance, Ecuadorian men gave only one first-person focus compliment while Table 6.15 shows that the Ecuadorian men gave many more first-person focused compliments on ability (13), more than from a second-person focus (7). Additionally, supportive elements used in compliments on ability followed the general pattern of using relatively few in conjunction with first-person focus compliments, with the number increasing as the personal focus of the compliments declined. This could be attributed to the number of compliments increasing as the focus of the compliment becomes more distant. This seems to be the case in Table 6.15 when looking at the number of compliments that had no supportive elements: both groups of men had the highest incidence of no supportive elements, proportionally, in compliments of the most personal (first

person) focus, and a smaller proportion of compliments with no supportive elements occurred when the compliment was more distant (third person).

As with supportive elements in appearance compliments, both groups of men used more forms of some supportive elements in conjunction with first person compliments than with second person compliments on ability. For example, Spanish men used repeated punctuation more often in first person compliments on ability than in second person compliments. One would expect the number of supportive elements to increase steadily as the distance increases, but in some instances, use of supportive elements drops and then bounces back for third person compliments, for example, use of punctuation in both groups of men.

There are some differences in the use of supportive elements overall by the two groups, specifically, Ecuadorian men use forms of address more in compliments on ability than Spanish men: 80 (43%) instances versus only 7 (15%) instances. A similar situation occurred with repeated punctuation: Ecuadorian men used this more than Spanish men: 89 (48% of all supportive elements) occurrences as opposed to 15 (31%) occurrence. The only supportive element that Spanish men used more than Ecuadorian men was emoticons; overall, Ecuadorian men deployed supportive elements in compliments more often than Spanish men.

Ecuadorian men's penchant for using forms of address in their compliments on ability shows a willingness to display affection that seems to be absent from the Spanish male data. That said, of the 80 instances of forms of address in compliments on ability, 54 of those pertained to EM26, leaving just 26 compliments on ability directed at participants besides EM26 that included

forms of address. Perhaps Ecuadorian men feel that complimenting another man on ability does not conflict with their masculinity in the same way as complimenting appearance would.

When examining compliments on ability from a first-person perspective, the compliments in the two groups are largely similar in that they followed either syntactic pattern I or J. This was partially discussed in Example 6.5 with respect to EM26 and the number of implicit compliments on his artwork, in which those complimenting asked EM26 to do a tattoo for them. The majority of compliments on ability by Spanish men from a first-person perspective use pattern I, most of those deploying the verb *gustar* ('to like'). Ecuadorian men also chose *gustar* most often in compliments on ability of syntactic pattern I. One caveat however is that overall, there were few compliments on ability using pattern I. More data would shed light on whether the use of *gustar* is a regular occurrence for Ecuadorian and Spanish men, or whether its use is specific to the friends of the participants of this study.

Overall, Ecuadorian men give compliments on ability to other men more than Spanish men. Raw numbers however, do not provide any insight into their composition. EM26 is a good example of this: viewing the numbers for compliments on ability among Ecuadorian men would lead one to conclude that overall, Ecuadorian men value ability, and this is reflected in the compliments that they give each other. However, a greater proportion of Spanish participants than Ecuadorian received more than one compliment on ability, which may indicate that Spanish men generally place more importance on ability than Ecuadorian men. Despite these differences, the two groups of men followed the same general pattern of usage for syntactic patterns. Both groups of men give the

majority of compliments on ability from a third person focus but preferred first person focused ability compliments over second person focus. Spanish men used supportive elements more frequently than Ecuadorian men overall, though Ecuadorian men used supportive elements slightly more often than Spanish men in third person focus ability compliments.

6.3.3 Personality

Compliments on personality featured prominently in the Ecuadorian data, but less regularly in the Spanish corpus. A side-by-side comparison of the compliments received by participants in both groups shows that not only was personality a regular topic of compliment among Ecuadorian men, but that the majority of Ecuadorian participants received at least one compliment on personality, contrasted to the Spanish men, the majority of whom did not receive any compliments on personality. Contrary to expectations based on previous compliment studies that briefly describe male-male compliment behavior (see Rees-Miller 2011 and Parisi and Wogan 2006), a handful of Ecuadorian participants received the majority of compliments on personality. Table 6.16 offers an initial overview of compliments on personality given to the participants in the two groups.

Table 6. 16 Compliments on personality

	Total compliments	Personality compliments		Total compliments	Personality compliments
EM1	41	22 (54%)	SM1	3	0
EM2	25	6 (24%)	SM2	QUIT STUDY	
EM3	QUIT STUDY		SM3	EXCLUDED	
EM4	0	0	SM4	NO PHOTOS	
EM5	NO PHOTOS		SM5	1	0
EM6	NO PHOTOS		SM6	1	0
EM7	13	2 (15%)	SM7	1	0

EM8	1	0	SM8	4	0
EM9	13	10 (77%)	SM9	NO PHOTOS	
EM10	5	1 (20%)	SM10	9	0
EM11	26	3 (12%)	SM11	22	2 (9%)
EM12	3	3 (100%)	SM12	2	1 (50%)
EM13	8	0	SM13	11	2 (18%)
EM14	7	4 (57%)	SM14	0	0
EM15	22	6 (27%)	SM15	9	1 (11%)
EM16	12	1 (8%)	SM16	13	1 (8%)
EM17	24	5 (21%)	SM17	0	0
EM18	65	19 (29%)	SM18	0	0
EM19	9	1 (11%)	SM19	5	0
EM20	11	1 (9%)	SM20	1	0
EM21	EXCLUDED		SM21	1	0
EM22	EXCLUDED		SM22	81	1 (1%)
EM23	EXCLUDED		SM23	NO PHOTOS	
EM24	3	1 (33%)	SM24	0	0
EM25	0	0	SM25	1	0
EM26	176	6 (3%)	SM26	3	1 (33%)
EM27	2	0	SM27	EXCLUDED	
EM28	3	0	SM28	7	3 (43%)
EM29	6	0	SM29	0	0
EM30	6	2 (33%)	SM30	EXCLUDED	
EM31	28	4 (14%)	SM31	20	7 (35%)
EM32	15	1 (7%)	SM32	6	0
			SM33	1	0
			SM34	10	0
Total	524	99 (19%)	Total	212	19 (9%)

What constitutes a compliment on personality varies, as are the types of photos that elicit compliments on personality. Something that occurred repeatedly in both groups of participants were comments on a meme (an image that is widely spread on the Internet, often altered for humorous effect), a comic, a still from a film, or some other photo that did not involve the participant or somebody connected to the participant. This type of photo often generated many comments amongst both groups of men, however, the majority of these comments typically consisted of laughter and little more.

I debated whether to include such comments as compliments on personality; written laughter on a humorous post by a participant is akin to a

face-to-face interaction in which one person tells a joke, and another person laughs, which is not typically considered to be a compliment. It could be construed as a positive response, at the very least, but, in a face-to-face interaction, laughter is not a speech act, nor is it a compliment. The scenario is slightly different in online communication, and there is an argument to be made that written depictions of laughter could constitute a compliment: the person making the comment has to take the time and effort (however minimal) to type out a depiction of laughter, a show of appreciation of the humorous post. The study participant presumably feels validated that one of his friends has appreciated his humor. All that said, for purposes of the current study, I have only included such incidents as compliments if there was further written elaboration of appreciation in addition to written laughter. Some examples of this are given in Example 6.6.

Example 6. 6 Compliments on memes

EM1's photo of a group of women dressed in bikinis, with the text, *TIPOS DE CHICAS MALAS* ('types of bad girls') with further description of the 'types' beneath the picture

Male 1: *jajajjaa buenaza...jjjjjjjj* ('hahahhaa very good...!!!!!!!')

Male 2: *jajajaja a ya asi sera jajaja.... buena buena esta mijin*
('hahahaha it will be like that hahaha... good good this my boy')

Male 3: *buenaaq buena jajajjaa x fin pgas una jjjjjjj* ('good good hahahhaa finally you pay one haha')

I have included the comments in Example 6.6 with compliments on personality because they show appreciation for SM1's sense of humor. A similar example arose in the Spanish data, though it seemed to be more of a compliment

on the Spanish participant's taste in movies rather than sense of humor, shown in Example 6.7.

Example 6. 7 Compliment on a movie still

SM28's photo of a smartly dressed yet disheveled looking woman
pointing a gun with the caption "*Qué grandeee*" ('How grand')

Male 1: *Dios, me encanta esta escena!!!!* ('God, I love this scene!!!!')

The Spanish male participants posted many meme-type photos, the majority of which elicited some reaction from their male friends but did not go beyond written depictions of laughter. Some of the Spanish compliments on personality did focus on the participant's sense of humor, as in Example 6.8.

Example 6. 8 Compliment on personality

Cartoon drawing of SM31 with breasts that he's squeezing

Male 1: *permítaseme que me ría* ('allow me to laugh')

Similar to Example 6.7, Male 1's comment in Example 6.8 qualifies as a compliment because it shows an appreciation for SM31's sense of humor, which is demonstrated in SM31's posting a semi-pornographic drawing of himself.

To better understand how compliments on personality are formulated, I turn next to syntactic patterns used in compliments on personality, an overview of which is given in Table 6.17.

Table 6. 17 Syntactic patterns in personality compliments

Syntactic pattern	Code	Ecuadorian men	Spanish men
(NP) + V(+Intens) + ADJ/ADV	A	-	-
V (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV (+NP)	B	8 (8%)	1 (5%)
V (+NP) (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV	C	-	1 (5%)
(Interj) + (qué) + ADJ/ADV (+Poss + NP)	D	-	-
(Interj) + (qué) + ADJ/ADV (+que + V)	E	-	-
Qué (+ADJ) + NP (+que + V)	F	19 (19%)	2 (11%)
(Intens) + ADJ/ADV	G	26 (26%)	3 (16%)
Cómo + V	H	-	2 (11%)
NP + gustar/fascinar/encantar	I	-	3 (16%)

Implicit compliment	J	5 (5%)	3 (16%)
NP	L	8 (8%)	2 (11%)
Qué + NP + tan/más + ADJ	O	-	-
NP + ADJ/ADV	P	4 (4%)	-
Other	Q	8 (8%)	-
Qué + ADJ/ADV	R	7 (7%)	-
ADJ/ADV + NP	S	13 (13%)	1 (5%)
Tan...como	T	-	-
ADJ/ADV + V (+NP)	U	1 (1%)	-
V + NP	V	-	1 (5%)
TOTAL		99	19

The aspect of Table 6.17 that stands out is that there is a large variety of syntactic patterns used by both groups of men when complimenting personality: each group used ten different syntactic patterns. Due to the higher number of compliments on personality by Ecuadorian men compared to Spanish men, there is a noticeable preference among Ecuadorian men for some syntactic patterns when complimenting personality, those being patterns G and F. Again, there is a heavy reliance on adjectives when realizing compliments by Ecuadorian men. The picture is less clear for Spanish men: there is a significantly smaller number of personality compliments overall in the Spanish corpus and no clear preference for any one syntactic pattern emerges.

The adjective most favored by Ecuadorian men when complimenting personality within syntactic pattern G and overall was *bueno* (good'). The adverb *bien* ('good') appeared regularly in compliments on personality, within a variety of syntactic patterns. The Spanish men, in contrast, did not use *bien* at all in compliments about personality, nor did they favor *bueno* (see Table 5.3 for adjectives used by Spanish men in all compliment categories).

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the syntactic patterns used in compliments on personality was the Ecuadorian men's use of the 'other' pattern, the pattern with no fixed form. Compliments in this non-pattern were more

elaborate, and the majority of these were framed in a second person perspective. I did not include them as implicit compliments, however, because while there was some creativity involved in their formulation, there was no inferencing required to understand them. Some examples of pattern-less personality compliments given to the Ecuadorian male participants are shown in Example 6.9.

Example 6. 9 Pattern-less compliments on personality: Ecuadorian men

- (a) *Lo bueno pana que eres de carácter y como dices la vida sigue y lo mejor de buena compañía* ('The good thing buddy is that you have character and as you say life goes on and at best with good company')
- (b) *vos eres un chuchas y sabes salir adelante....* ('you are a cunt and you know how to go forward')

In some ways, the examples listed in Example 6.9 (and others in the data) are words of encouragement as well as compliments, Example 6.9(b) particularly, as it was a comment on a photo of EM31's bandaged fingers pictured in front of an x-ray. The compliment, *vos eres un chuchas y sabes salir adelante...* is an example of in-group name calling (*chuchas*, 'cunt'), that is, mock impoliteness (see Mugford and Montes, 2020), and simultaneous encouragement and complimenting with the phrase *sabes salir adelante*.

The category of personality is in some respects a catch-all category: there are various sub-topics of compliments on personality that surface repeatedly, such as a participant's sense of humor, cultural tastes, or lifestyle. Some compliments on personality are more vague, along the lines of, *eres un tío genial*

(‘you are a great uncle’ in a photo of a Spanish participant with his nephew). A compliment of this sort can only fit within a broad category like personality.

Viewing compliments to Ecuadorian and Spanish men through the lens of compliment focus (first, second, or third person) is illuminating; Table 6.18 sets out the focus of personality compliments vis-à-vis supportive elements in personality compliments.

Table 6. 18 Supportive elements vis-à-vis compliment focus (personality)

	Personal focus and number of each	Laughter	Emoticon	Form of address	<i>Abrazos</i>	Textual alteration	Repeated Punctuation	Love	No supportive element
Ecu.	1 (1)	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
	2 (13)	6	1	7	0	3	6	0	2 (15%)
	3 (84)	43	0	26	2	31	35	0	5 (6%)
Spain	1 (4)	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1 (25%)
	2 (3)	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1 (33%)
	3 (12)	4	1	2	1	3	2	0	4 (33%)

The numbers in Table 6.18 show a distinct difference in the behavior of Ecuadorian and Spanish men with respect to supportive elements, though there are some similarities between the two groups of men. Looking past the raw numbers of compliments from each perspective (first, second, or third person) and instead considering proportions of these, both the Ecuadorian and Spanish men give compliments on personality from a second person-focus at approximately the same rate, 13% and 16%, respectively. The situation changes considerably for personality compliments from first person-focused compliments: Ecuadorian men do this in only 1% of personality compliments and Spanish men in 21% of personality compliments. This sort of discrepancy is also present in third person focused compliments, with Ecuadorian men heavily

favoring this approach, using it in 85% of personality compliments and Spanish men doing it only 63% of the time. Overall, both groups of men favored a third person focus approach to complimenting personality, but the Ecuadorian men displayed a greater preference for this tactic.

Despite favoring a third person, less personal perspective when complimenting personality, Ecuadorian men used supportive elements much more frequently overall than Spanish men in personality compliments, across all perspectives. While it is true that there were far fewer instances of Spanish personality compliments (19 versus 99), proportionally, Spanish men appeared more willing to compliment from a first-person perspective, which suggests that Spanish men are less hesitant than Ecuadorian men in giving compliments that appear more intimate.

Herbert (1990) implies that compliments from a first-person perspective are somehow more affiliative, and are used less by men than women, presumably because of the personal nature of first person focus compliments as compared to second- and third-person focused compliments. Example 6.10 demonstrates that this is not always the case.

Example 6. 10 First person focused personality compliment (Ecuador)
EM2's photo of himself, three other men, and Pamela Anderson

Male 1: *EM2 te envidio maaaaal, la mejor mujer de este mundo!*

(‘EM2 I am wickedly jealous of you, the best woman in the world!’)

The compliment in Example 6.10 is an implicit compliment on EM2's personality because it implies that EM2 has a desirable lifestyle, which allows him to meet ‘the best woman in the world’, presumably because of EM2's personality or some other personal attribute of EM2. Male 1 explicitly expresses

envy towards EM2 for meeting Pamela Anderson, using two supportive elements in this compliment: a form of address and letter elongation, presumably to strengthen the affect of his compliment and diminish any face threat: envy is a strong word that can have negative connotations.

First person-focused compliments that appear to center the complimenter and not the complimentee are not unique to the Ecuadorian men: there was a similar example in the Spanish data, given in Example 6.11.

Example 6. 11 First person focused personality compliment (Spain)

SM11's photo of himself on holiday

Male 1: *Se te está poniendo "Blanco crepúsculo" y cara de tío formal.*

Toma el sol ¿eh?. Me alegro mucho campeón ('You're becoming

"twilight white" with the face of a serious man. Get some sun, ok?

I'm very happy champion')

Male 1, the man giving the compliment in Example 6.11, states that he is pleased for SM11 (*"Me alegro mucho campeón"*). This, however, is after making a comment that implies that SM11 is working too hard, based on his pale appearance. Male 1 expresses his pleasure that SM11 is doing well, but indirectly reminding him to relax by getting some sun. As with Example 6.10, Male 1 in Example 6.11 uses a supportive element: the form of address, *campeón*. Male 1 expresses his own pleasure for how SM11 is doing, rather than actually congratulating SM11 for his success. Although this compliment is ostensibly more affiliative as it is from a first-person perspective, it focuses on the thoughts and feelings of the complimenter, rather than the intended recipient of the compliment.

Ecuadorian and Spanish men used second person-focus compliments with similar frequencies in compliments on personality. A side-by-side comparison of how the two groups of men realize such compliments is given in Example 6.12.

Example 6. 12 Second person-focus personality compliments

	Ecuadorian men		Spanish men
(a)	<i>Jajaj tas loco pana</i> 'Hahah you're crazy buddy'	(b)	<i>eres una maquina</i> 'you are a machine'
(c)	<i>SOS GRANDE AMIGO MIO</i> 'YOU ARE GREAT MY FRIEND'	(d)	<i>Ohhhh tu eres lo mas mono mi niño !!</i> 'Ohhh you are the cutest my boy !!'

Supportive elements occurring in second person-focus personality compliments in both groups of men include emoticons, forms of address, textual alteration, and repeated punctuation. Spanish men did not use laughter, though the Ecuadorian men did. There was not one form of supportive element that the Spanish men used above any other; they used each only once. The Ecuadorian men, on the other hand, favored forms of address, laughter, and repeated punctuation over other supportive elements in second person-focus personality compliments. It is interesting to see the frequent use of forms of address by Ecuadorian men despite the fact that verb conjugations should make clear whom the compliment is directed towards. Despite this, Ecuadorian men used a wide variety of forms of address, including: *pana* ('buddy'), *man*, shortened names, *loco* ('crazy'), *mijo* ('my son'), and *amigo* ('friend'). Use of forms of address in second person focus compliments may be an attempt to mitigate any face threats or to prevent misunderstanding: by using a friendly form of address, the

compliment recipient understands the compliment as something coming from a place of good intentions.

Compliments on personality from a third person perspective featured most prominently in both groups of men. The majority of these took elliptical forms and followed compliment pattern G. This pattern of compliment is often difficult to attribute to a particular topic of compliment; it is rather vague to leave a comment such as *muy buena* ('very good') and leaves the object of compliment open to interpretation, reiterating the importance of context when examining speech acts: if there is no knowledge of the context, a researcher cannot make an accurate guess as to what the compliment involves. Many third person focus comments in pattern G occurred in conjunction with memes, particularly among the Ecuadorian men, who had many more examples of these compliments than the Spanish men. I attributed such compliments to personality because I view them an evaluation of the participant's manner of thinking or sense of humor, as in Examples 6.7 and 6.8.

Another commonly occurring theme of compliments on personality, seen exclusively among Ecuadorian participants, was what I classify as those relating to masculinity and/or success with women. Compliments on personality of this type were from a third person perspective, and typically followed the type of forms as in Example 6.13.

Example 6. 13 Compliments on personality: success with women

- (a) Photo of EM18 standing on a beach (fully clothed) with a woman in a bikini draped over his shoulders.

Male 1: *guaaaaoo guau guau jeje chevere la bufanda humana jaja* ('wow wow wow haha cool the human scarf haha')

- (b) Photo of EM14 playing a guitar with two women looking on, smiling.

Male 1: *todo un lover!!* ('complete lover')

The compliments in Example 6.13 again demonstrate a need among the Ecuadorian men to display their masculinity. Whether this is a common characteristic of young men from Quito, or something more prevalent in Quiteño or wider Ecuadorian society is unknown. It is interesting that the Spanish men did not give compliments to each other of this nature. This subtle difference between the two groups of participants is useful because it helps give cultural insights. The first compliment in Example 6.13 shows this most clearly: the compliment is not directed towards the nearly nude woman in the photo but at the fully clothed man “wearing” her. The man, EM18, is given credit for possessing this beautiful “object.” This notion was reflected in many of the personality compliments given in relation to memes. Many of the memes were of nearly nude women, sexually explicit photos, or used sexist language. Personality compliments on such photos were restricted to the Ecuadorian participants.

Compliments on personality among young Ecuadorian and Spanish men appear to encompass a variety of sub-topics, including sense of humor, seen in both groups of men, and masculinity, which was only seen among Ecuadorian men. Both groups of men showed a preference for giving compliments on personality from a third person perspective. Although the most favored syntactic pattern among Ecuadorian men was the simplest one, the Ecuadorian men also gave several compliments on personality that had no set pattern, showing creativity in such compliments.

6.3.4 Friendship

Spanish men gave few compliments on friendship, particularly as compared to Ecuadorian men, though overall friendship was not a very common topic of compliments in either group. It is useful to examine the content of the photos posted by participants in the two groups that attracted compliments on friendship, as well as to consider the networks of friendship groups among the Ecuadorian participants.

There were two friendship groups within the Ecuadorian participants (see Appendix D). In one group, EM20 and EM31 are connected as FB friends. The majority of compliments on friendship in the Ecuadorian corpus were received by EM31, two of those from EM20, but EM31 did not reciprocate to EM20. This does not necessarily indicate that these men are not close friends; indeed, it may be the case that the lack of compliments among this group of men, particularly the absence of compliments on friendship, supports Das's (2010) dissertation theory, based on Wolfson's (1988, 1989) Bulge theory, that a more intimate face-to-face relationship decreases the likelihood of high levels of interaction on social media (2010). Social distance is not a micro social factor that is being controlled in the current study, so I cannot definitively state whether Bulge theory is applicable to Ecuadorian men on FB.

As discussed in Chapter 4.2.5, compliments on friendship were present among the Ecuadorian men, and many friendship compliments focused on old school photos, invoking an air of nostalgia in the compliments. Table 6.19 gives a comparative overview of friendship compliments in the two groups of participants. Apart from EM31, men in both groups received few compliments on friendship.

Table 6. 19 Compliments on friendship

	Total compliments	Friendship compliments		Total compliments	Friendship compliments
EM1	41	3 (7%)	SM1	3	0
EM2	25	0	SM2	QUIT STUDY	
EM3	QUIT STUDY		SM3	EXCLUDED	
EM4	0	0	SM4	NO PHOTOS	
EM5	NO PHOTOS		SM5	1	0
EM6	NO PHOTOS		SM6	1	0
EM7	13	3 (23%)	SM7	1	0
EM8	1	1 (100%)	SM8	4	1 (25%)
EM9	13	1 (8%)	SM9	NO PHOTOS	
EM10	5	0	SM10	9	0
EM11	26	2 (8%)	SM11	22	0
EM12	3	0	SM12	2	0
EM13	8	1 (13%)	SM13	11	1 (9%)
EM14	7	0	SM14	0	0
EM15	22	2 (9%)	SM15	9	0
EM16	12	0	SM16	13	1 (8%)
EM17	24	4 (14%)	SM17	0	0
EM18	65	3 (5%)	SM18	0	0
EM19	9	3 (33%)	SM19	5	1 (20%)
EM20	11	5 (45%)	SM20	1	0
EM21	EXCLUDED		SM21	1	0
EM22	EXCLUDED		SM22	81	0
EM23	EXCLUDED		SM23	NO PHOTOS	
EM24	3	0	SM24	0	0
EM25	0	0	SM25	1	1 (100%)
EM26	176	1 (.6%)	SM26	3	0
EM27	2	0	SM27	EXCLUDED	
EM28	3	0	SM28	7	0
EM29	6	1 (17%)	SM29	0	0
EM30	6	0	SM30	EXCLUDED	
EM31	28	19 (68%)	SM31	20	0
EM32	15	5 (33%)	SM32	6	1 (17%)
			SM33	1	0
			SM34	10	0
Total	524	54 (10%)	Total	212	6 (2.8%)

Out of the six compliments on friendship given to Spanish participants, only one had a strong feeling of nostalgia; the remainder were more along the lines of Example 6.14, which could be interpreted as nostalgic to an extent, but seem more focused on one specific occasion spent together.

Example 6. 14 Spanish compliments on friendship

(a) SM25's photo of four men on an amusement park ride.

Male 1: *uiii jajja que bien no lo pasamos* ('whee haha what a good time we had')

(b) SM16's photo of four men at a festival.

Male 1: *k bien nos lo pasamos ehhh!!! :D* ('what a good time we had, eh!!! :D')

Two different men made the compliments on the photos in Example 6.14, but they are essentially identical. Interestingly, the expression, *que bien nos lo pasamos*, did not occur at all in the Ecuadorian data, nor did the syntactic pattern in question used in Example 6.14 (pattern E) occur in the Ecuadorian corpus.

Table 6.20 shows the syntactic patterns favored by each group of men for compliments on friendship.

Table 6. 20 Syntactic patterns in compliments on friendship

Syntactic pattern	Code	Ecuadorian men	Spanish men
(NP) + V(+Intens) + ADJ/ADV	A	-	-
V (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV (+NP)	B	5 (9%)	-
V (+NP) (+Intens) + ADJ/ADV	C	-	1 (17%)
(Interj) + (qué) + ADJ/ADV (+Poss + NP)	D	-	-
(Interj) + (qué) + ADJ/ADV (+que + V)	E	-	2 (33%)
Qué (+ADJ) + NP (+que + V)	F	9 (17%)	1 (17%)
(Intens) + ADJ/ADV	G	1 (2%)	-
Cómo + V	H	-	-
NP + gustar/fascinar/encantar	I	1 (2%)	-
Implicit compliment	J	19 (35%)	1 (17%)
NP	L	8 (15%)	-
Qué + NP + tan/más + ADJ	O	-	-
NP + ADJ/ADV	P	2 (4%)	-
Other	Q	3 (6%)	1 (17%)
Qué + ADJ/ADV	R	-	-
ADJ/ADV + NP	S	5 (9%)	-
Tan...como	T	-	-
ADJ/ADV + V (+NP)	U	1 (2%)	-
V + NP	V	-	-
TOTAL		54	6

Table 6.20 provides further insight into the differences between Ecuadorian and Spanish men in their complimenting behavior. Chapter 5.4 showed that overall, in all categories of compliments, Spanish men favored implicit forms of compliments, along with pattern G. It is tempting to suggest that, based on their preference for implicit compliments about friendship, Ecuadorian men place more importance on their male-male friendships than Spanish men. However, before generalizing, Ecuadorian male implicit compliments should be examined more closely. Example 6.15 lists several examples of implicit compliments on friendship by Ecuadorian men.

Example 6. 15 Ecuadorian implicit compliments on friendship

- (a) *cuando se repite pues panita...!!!* ('when will we do it again buddy...!!!')
- (b) *esa es mijin.....propongo un reencuentro maldito....MIEMBROS..!!!!* ('that's it buddy.....I propose a naughty re-encounter....MEMBERS..!!!!')

The theme of the compliments in Example 6.15 is making a date to get together again as friends. Ecuadorian men used a variety of ways to express this, but the gist of all of these implicit compliments on friendship was the same, demonstrating a propensity to rely on a formula for giving compliments on friendship. The Spanish male implicit compliment on friendship in Example 6.16 shows a similar pattern to the compliments by Ecuadorian men in Example 6.15.

Example 6. 16 Spanish implicit compliment on friendship

- Uuuuuf quiero volver a esos momentos!!* ('Uuuf, I want to go back to those moments!!')

Taking Examples 6.15 and 6.16 together, a pattern emerges within implicit compliments on friendship, present in both groups of men. Although there is only one example from the Spanish corpus, the fact that the one example available conforms to a frequently occurring pattern in the Ecuadorian corpus suggests that this method is a typical way for young Ecuadorian and Spanish men to express their positive feelings on their male friendships.

The second most common syntactic pattern of friendship compliments among Ecuadorians, also used once by Spanish men, was Pattern F, while the majority of the Ecuadorian compliments using pattern F relied on an adjective, there were two compliments that relied on a noun phrase to convey a positive message. The Spanish example of pattern F also relied on a noun phrase to express the compliment. These examples are found in Example 6.17.

Example 6. 17 Use of noun/noun phrase in friendship compliment

	Ecuadorian men		Spanish men
(a)	<i>Jajaj q goce esa fotooooo.....</i> Haha what a joy this photo.....	(b)	<i>¡Qué noche de risas!</i> What a night of laughter!
(c)	<i>JHAJAJAJAJJAAJA QUE GOCEE QUE ERES PANA</i> Ha ha what a pleasure you are buddy		

The compliments in Example 6.17 all use the same syntactic pattern, and two of them use the same noun (*gocce* – ‘joy’). However, the focus of all three compliments is slightly different: one is the photo (6.17(a)), one refers to the compliment recipient (6.17(c)), and the last refers to a specific enjoyable evening (6.17(b)). It is interesting to see how the two groups of men use the same

pattern, and sometimes the same word, take unique paths to arrive at the same result: a compliment on friendship.

The use of supportive elements and the personal focus of compliments are rather mixed with respect to friendship; the pattern of use for the varying degrees of closeness (first, second, and third) seen in relation to other topics of compliments does not hold for compliments on friendship, as demonstrated by Table 6.21.

Table 6. 21 Supportive elements vis-à-vis compliment focus (friendship)

	Personal focus and number of each	Laughter	Emoticon	Form of address	<i>Abrazos</i>	Textual alteration	Repeated Punctuation	Love	No supportive element
Ecu.	1 (9)	3	0	4	0	3	5	1	0
	2 (1)	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
	3 (44)	11	2	9	2	13	19	1	12 (27%)
Spain	1 (3)	1	1	-	0	2	2	0	0
	2 (1)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
	3 (2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2 (100%)

Both groups use first person focused compliments more than second person focused compliments, and this is more obvious in the Ecuadorian group. This result lends credibility to the notion that first person focused compliments are not as affiliative as previously suggested and that they shift focus of the compliment to the speaker, rather than the hearer, the compliment recipient. It is also interesting to note that each group only uses second person-focused compliments, in my view the most personal, once. As with other compliment topics, the Ecuadorian men relied most heavily on third person focused compliments. The Spanish men, on the other hand, did not fulfill expectations and used first person focused compliments most often.

The motivation for using first person focused compliments in relation to friendship may be an attempt to build solidarity: the speaker is relaying his perception on a shared moment or history, thereby attempting to reinforce ties of friendship. Some examples of this are given in Example 6.18.

Example 6. 18 First-person focus friendship compliments

	Ecuadorian men		Spanish men
(a)	<i>jajajaj que tiempos aquellos inolvidables, espero algún momento podamos repetirlo</i> 'hahaha what unforgettable times, I hope some time we can do it again'	(b)	<i>Uuuuf quiero volver a esos momentos!!</i> 'Uuuf, I want to go back to those moments!!'
(c)	<i>ojala podamos estar todos, en lo posible antes que se termine el año para recordar viejos tiempos</i> 'I hope we can all be together, before the end of the year if possible to remember old times'		

The compliments in Example 6.18 are not entirely straightforward. I have classified compliments that use the first-person plural pronoun (*nosotros* – 'we'), or the corresponding verb conjugation, as first-person focused compliments. In this way, such compliments are a bit of a hybrid of first- and second-person focus, which fits nicely with compliments on friendship, as it includes both the speaker and the hearer as the focus. Some examples of this are shown in Example 6.19.

Example 6. 19 Friendship compliments using 3rd person plural verb form Ecuador:

- (a) *lo q mejor sabiamos hacer...pasarla bien...!!!* ('what we do best...have fun...!!!')
- (b) *hasta ahora seguimos siendo panas del putas.....!!!!* ('still awesome friends.....!!!!')

Spain:

(c) *uiii jajja que bien no lo pasamos* ('uiii haha what fun we had')

(d) *k bien nos lo pasamos eehh!!! :D* ('what fun we had, eh!!! :D')

The compliments in Example 6.19 are first person focused (as opposed to second or third) because they are from the speaker's perspective, though they would also make sense from a second person, but then the subject of the compliments more closely resembles personality compliments. Considering Example 6.19(a), by changing the verb conjugation to one reflecting a second person focus would yield: *lo q mejor sabes hacer...pasarla bien...!!!* ('what you do best...have fun...!!!'). This would make a bit less sense in the Spanish examples, but would still function as a compliment, though arguably the compliment would also change from one on friendship to personality, as in, *jaja que bien lo pasaste* ('haha what fun you had'), as such a change makes the compliment seem like more of an evaluation on the recipient's ability to have fun, i.e., his personality.

Table 6.21 illustrates how frequently supportive elements featured in compliments on friendship. Some form of supportive element, in both the Ecuadorian and Spanish corpora, always accompanied compliments on friendship from a first- or second-person perspective. Surprisingly, forms of address did not feature in compliments on friendship as often as with other topics. Many compliments on friendship, particularly among the Ecuadorian men, were expressed via implicit means, which could explain the lack of supportive elements: the intention and meaning of implicit compliments on friendship may be clear enough and nothing extra is required.

As with other compliment topics, both Ecuadorian and Spanish men used proportionally fewer supportive elements in conjunction with third person-focus compliments, which seems counterintuitive. The Spanish men did not use any supportive elements at all with third person focus compliments.

There are a few more points of note with respect to supportive elements in compliments of friendship. The first is the use of expressions of love by the Ecuadorian men: this happened both in a first person and a third person focus compliment. This is noteworthy because of the hyper masculine attitude often displayed by Ecuadorian men (see Chapter 4.2.2). Despite this prevalent attitude, the only examples of expressions of love as supportive elements come from Ecuadorian men, in compliments on friendship. This supports the idea that the displays of masculinity may be for show only, and they do not accurately reflect the views of Ecuadorian men, but rather a public part that Ecuadorian men are expected to play. The statements of love here are unequivocal and add affect to the compliments on friendship:

se les quiere y extraña ('Love you (all) and miss you (all)')

los quiero full lokitos ('I love you (all) buddies')

These expressions of love as supportive elements are softened slightly by being directed at multiple people, rather than one man in particular, which could be misconstrued as some expression of romantic love.

Compliments on friendship were the one topic in which Ecuadorian men used emoticons more than Spanish men, though Ecuadorian men only used two emoticons to the Spanish men's one. Ecuadorian men used emoticons along with third person focus compliments while the Spanish example occurs in a first person focus compliment.

6.3.5 Children and pets

The remaining topics of compliments, children and pets, occurred infrequently in both corpora. The major difference between the two groups arises with respect to compliments on children: none of the Spanish participants appeared to have any children of their own, while there were three Ecuadorian participants with small children, and one other child in which it is not clear whether the child pictured belongs to the participant or not (though based on the participant's other photos, it seems a reasonable assumption that the child is the participant's niece). Despite at least three of the Ecuadorian participants having their own children, the Ecuadorian men received relatively few compliments on children (nine in total). There were many comments on photos of the children of the Ecuadorian participants, but those were more along the lines of *enhorabuena* ('congratulations') and are not included as compliments.

Although pets as a topic of compliments features in the data, it does not feature frequently: nine instances in the Ecuadorian data and only once in the Spanish data. Neither children nor pets seemed to be a high priority for Ecuadorian or Spanish men for giving compliments. There were not many opportunities in the Spanish data to give compliments on these two topics, but they were present nonetheless. One potential reason for so few instances in the data of compliments on children or pets could be because cooing over babies and animals is something typically expected of women. The compliments on pets bear this out, to some extent, as shown in Example 6.20.

Example 6. 20 Compliments on pets

	Ecuadorian men		Spanish men
(a)	<i>[dog's name] q bacan ya esta grandote esa bestia jajajaja</i>	(b)	<i>Que caña de perro!</i>

	[dog's name] how cool now this beast is huge haha		What a top dog!
(c)	<i>ese animal !!!! Jajajajajaajaj</i> that animal !!!! Ha ha		

One final point with respect to the compliment topics of children and pets is that Ecuadorian men used third person focus compliments exclusively in compliments for both children and pets. There were fewer examples of compliments on children and pets in the Spanish corpus (three in total), but one of these used a first person focus when complimenting a participant's nephew. The use of third person focus compliments exclusively by Ecuadorian may be part of their unconscious tendency to appear masculine in public.

6.4 Use of 'like' as a substitute for a compliment

As discussed in Chapters 2, 4, and 5 'like' in the context of FB is a tool that enables users to give a quick reaction to a photo or comment that they see on FB. This function is vague; it can be unclear what exactly is being 'liked', though the fact that 'like' represents a positive evaluation is unequivocal. 'Like' can convey appreciation for something (a photo, a comment, etc.) or it may convey agreement with something that has been posted to FB. For purposes of the current study, I treat 'like' as something akin to a compliment, in that it is a positive evaluation, but more as a separate type of supportive element.

Ecuadorian and Spanish men used 'like' frequently, both with respect to comments and photos on FB. There are a few dimensions involved in 'likes' and male behavior on FB: how the study participants themselves used 'like' in relation to their own comments and photos, and how the participants' male

friends used 'like' with respect to the participants' comments and photos. An abbreviated form of Tables 4.15 and 5.17 is shown in Table 6.22, which shows the 'likes' associated with comments and photos for both groups of participants.

Table 6. 22 Use of 'like' as a supportive element

Ecuador	Total 'likes' comments		Total 'likes' photos		Spain	Total 'likes' comments		Total 'likes' photos	
	Own	Men	Own	Men		Own	Men	Own	Men
	2,946	689	663	3,480		891	323	169	1,671

Table 6.22 highlights how Ecuadorian men use 'like' more overall than Spanish men. The Ecuadorian participants 'liked' comments on their own photos about three times more often than the Spanish participants, and 'liked' their own photos nearly four times more often than the Spanish participants. A higher level of use of the 'like' function extended to Ecuadorian men (non-participants) as well: Ecuadorian men 'liked' comments and photos more than two times as often as Spanish participants.

Ecuadorian participants had 2,939 photos with comments and Ecuadorian men made 9,512 comments on those photos (see Chapter 4.1). The Spanish corpus had 1,931 photos with comments and 3,800 comments from men on those photos (see Chapter 5.1). The Ecuadorian men had more opportunities to 'like' comments and photos than the Spanish men, but the number of photos and comments does not seem to accurately predict the level of engagement by FB friends. An example of this is the engagement of Spanish women with the data: the Spanish women gave the Spanish men more compliments and gave compliments on a larger range of photos (see Table 5.1). Similarly, Spanish women 'liked' more comments and photos than the Spanish men did (see Table 5.17). The current study is not about Spanish women, but they provide a useful

point of comparison because it shows that lack of opportunity is not an explanation for the lower usage of 'like' by Spanish men as compared to Ecuadorian men.

Both groups of men used 'like' much more than they gave compliments: Ecuadorian participants received 524 compliments on their photos from their male FB friends but 3,480 'likes' on photos from their male friends. Spanish participants received 212 compliments from their male FB friends and 1,671 'likes' from those friends. In this respect, the Spanish men used the 'like' function more than the Ecuadorian men: Spanish men received nearly eight times as many 'likes' than compliments on their photos, with the Ecuadorian men receiving over six times as many 'likes' than compliments. Both Spanish and Ecuadorian men appear to be more willing to 'like' than give a compliment on their male friends' photos, and to a higher degree among Spanish men. This suggests that 'like' is a simpler and more preferred method of engaging with FB friends among young Spanish and Ecuadorian men. Ecuadorian men's higher engagement on FB via 'like' is in keeping with the greater overall pattern of that data: in general, Ecuadorian men are more active participants on FB than Spanish men.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has shown many ways in which Ecuadorian and Spanish men are alike and how they differ with respect to topics of compliments, syntactic patterns of compliments, focus of compliments, and supportive elements used in compliments. Overall, Ecuadorian men engaged with each other to a greater degree than did Spanish men on FB.

Where, then, do the results of this study on male-male compliments fit in with other compliment studies, particularly those conducted on FB, those focused on male behavior, and those focused on Spanish speakers? In short, because there is little to no research on Ecuadorian and Spanish male compliments and responses, these two groups currently occupy their own space within compliment research, almost exclusively. There is not a complete absence of research into male compliment behavior; as discussed in Chapter 2 there are small snippets of information available to piece together about male compliment behavior from previous studies, but nothing gives a clear picture, particularly with respect to male-male activity, and not relating to Ecuadorian and Spanish men.

Based on previous studies of compliments, men were not expected to give many compliments to each other at all, and particularly not compliments on appearance. This turned out to not be the case with either group of men: the large majority of compliments among Spanish men focused on appearance, and the Ecuadorian men heavily focused on appearance as well. What has become clear through the results of this study is that both groups of men, while not complimenting each other as frequently as women, do compliment each other and at times express considerable affection through compliments.

Apart from appearance, the results of the current study indicate that Ecuadorian men value ability particularly as it was the most frequent topic of compliments. This is largely due to one participant having many photos displaying his abilities, but this does not detract from the finding that Ecuadorian men gave the majority of compliments on ability; it is true that there were many opportunities for this, but if the Ecuadorian men did not value this attribute, they

would not have given so many compliments. There were more opportunities for Ecuadorian men to give each other compliments on appearance, but the opportunities to give compliments on ability were seized more frequently.

Spanish men favored implicit compliments over other syntactic patterns, while Ecuadorian men favored simpler, elliptical constructions. Ecuadorian men, however, used implicit compliments in the majority of compliments on friendship. Despite previous views that implicit compliments are more creative than standard, formulaic versions (see Boyle 2000), the data in the current study has shown at various points that implicit compliments can be formulaic within various topics: appearance for Spanish men and friendship for Ecuadorian men. This is an interesting point that has not been raised previously with respect to compliments, and it is especially interesting that both groups of men resort to formulaic constructions, but in relation to different topics.

The next chapter offers a comparative analysis of compliment responses by the study participants with respect to compliments given by their male FB friends. I explore the compliment topics that received the most responses, forms of responses, and supportive elements used in responses.

Chapter 7

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ECUADORIAN AND SPANISH COMPLIMENT RESPONSES

7.1 Introduction

I have examined Ecuadorian and Spanish male-male compliments and compliment responses on FB in depth. In Chapter 6, I offered an extensive comparative analysis of male-male Ecuadorian and Spanish compliments on FB between the two groups, finding that overall, Ecuadorian men complimented more often than Spanish men, and favored compliments on ability most frequently, while Spanish men complimented most on appearance, with a large gap between the number of compliments on appearance and the next most common category, ability. In general, Ecuadorian men used supportive elements in conjunction with compliments more frequently than Spanish men.

This chapter replicates Chapter 6, this time with respect to compliment responses, first giving a comparative overview of the number of compliment responses vis-à-vis topics of compliments. Next, I focus on the forms that compliment responses take within the compliment response taxonomy applied in the current study (see Chapter 4.6). Finally, I look at supportive elements occurring along with compliment responses, including the participants' use of 'like' on its own, ostensibly as a compliment response.

7.2 Compliment responses vis-à-vis compliment categories

It is helpful to first present a side-by-side comparison of compliment responses given by the two groups of participants in relation to the topics of

compliments. This is given in Table 7.1, which is an amalgamation of Tables 4.17 and 5.19.

Table 7. 1 Compliment responses by category

		Total male compliments	Number of responses and percentage of total responses	Response rate per category
		Ecuador		
Categories of compliments	Appearance	150(28.6%)	41 (32.5%)	27.3%
	Possessions	16 (3.1%)	8 (6.3%)	50%
	Ability	187 (35.7%)	46 (36.5%)	24.6%
	Personality	99 (18.9%)	24 (19%)	24.2%
	Friendship	54 (10.3%)	4 (3.2%)	7.4%
	Child's appearance	9 (1.7%)	2 (1.6%)	22.2%
	Pets	9 (1.7%)	1 (0.8%)	11.1%
		524	126 (24%)	
		Spain		
Categories of compliments	Appearance	134(63%)	33 (67%)	24.6%
	Possessions	2 (.95%)	1 (2%)	50%
	Ability	48 (22.7%)	6 (12%)	12.5%
	Personality	19 (9%)	7 (14%)	36.8%
	Friendship	6 (2.8%)	0 (0%)	0%
	Child's appearance	2 (.95%)	2 (4%)	100%
	Pets	1 (4.7%)	0 (0%)	0%
		212	49 (23%)	

Table 7.1 shows that, overall, Ecuadorian and Spanish participants responded to compliments at similar rates overall: 24% and 23% of the time, respectively. Within particular categories of compliments, Ecuadorian participants appeared to be more responsive than the Spanish male participants, though this is unsurprising, as there were over twice as many male-male compliments in the Ecuadorian data than the Spanish data. However, if we compare the data from a different perspective, it appears that Spanish men are more responsive to compliments on personality than Ecuadorian men, responding to 36.8% of compliments on personality, as opposed to Ecuadorian men's response rate of 24.2%. Compliments on personality accounted for 18.9%

of all Ecuadorian male-male compliments and only 9% of Spanish male-male compliments, or half as many as received by the Ecuadorian participants. Out of all responses given by Ecuadorian men, 19% pertained to personality, while the Spanish men devoted 14% of all compliment responses to compliments on personality. The two groups of participants behave similarly in terms of the proportion of responses overall that pertain to personality, but the discrepancy arises in the proportionality of responses versus total compliments, with Spanish men responding to 36.8% of compliments on personality and Ecuadorian men responding to 24.2% of personality compliments. This may be accounted for by the smaller number of compliments and responses with respect to personality; more data would shed light on whether this is an overall trend in behavior, or a function the low numbers here.

Another interesting discrepancy in the response rates of the two groups of participants arises in the category of friendship, again keeping in mind the low number of responses overall: Ecuadorian participants did not respond to compliments on friendship very frequently, but it is in sharp contrast to the Spanish participants who did not respond to any of the (few) compliments that they received on friendship. Along these same lines are the response rates for compliments on a child's appearance: Spanish men, though appearing to have no children of their own, responded to compliments about children from other males in both instances, while the Ecuadorian participants only responded to such compliments 22.2% of the time, despite the children in the photos appearing to be the participants' own children (apart from one example).

Despite these differences, Ecuadorian and Spanish participants exhibited similar behavior in a few situations: in the compliment categories of appearance

and possessions, both groups of participants responded at the same or nearly the same rate. These similarities and differences between the compliment response rates lead to a few conclusions, the first being that Ecuadorian and Spanish men appear to place the same degree of importance on compliments received from men relating to appearance and possessions, demonstrated by the fact that, regardless of the raw numbers of compliments in each category and the number of responses in each category, the groups of participants had the same response rates, proportionally, for both.

Compliments on personality yielded a much higher response rate from the Spanish participants than the Ecuadorian participants. Following the same logic as that applied to response rates for compliments on appearance and possessions, it seems that Spanish men value compliments on personality more than Ecuadorian men value them. The response rate for Spanish participants for personality compliments is higher than that for compliments on appearance given to Spanish participants, suggesting that the Spanish participants may value compliments on personality more than they value compliments on appearance, because they have taken the time to respond.

Leaving aside the categories that had few compliments overall in both groups of participants, such as children and pets, examining the compliment response rates per category, it seems that the Ecuadorian participants value compliments on possessions most highly, followed by compliments on appearance, ability, and personality, which all received very similar response rates, and finally, compliments on friendship. Based solely on response rates, Spanish participants, like the Ecuadorian participants, valued compliments on

possessions most highly, followed closely by compliments on personality, with no responses to compliments on friendship, as noted.

Approaching the data from a different perspective, the number of responses overall, we see more differences in how the two groups of participants respond to compliments from their male FB friends. Ecuadorian participants give the majority of responses in two categories, appearance (32.5%) and ability (36.5%), and the proportions of those were loosely similar to the number of compliments received in each category. For example, 35.7% of compliments received by Ecuadorian men pertained to ability and 36.5% of responses by the Ecuadorian participants related to compliments on ability. This pattern did not hold true across all categories, for example, compliments on friendship accounted for 10.3% of all compliments received by the Ecuadorian participants, but the responses to those compliments only made up 3.2% of all responses.

There were some instances in which the Spanish participants' responses to compliments loosely corresponded with the proportion of compliments in each category, such as compliments on appearance: 63% of all compliments received by the Spanish participants related to appearance, and 67% of responses were to compliments on appearance. Overall however, Spanish participants' response rates did not track the corresponding proportion of compliment categories as closely as the Ecuadorian participants.

Despite this series of small differences, with respect to the number of responses given in relation to the number of compliments, the Ecuadorian and Spanish participants behaved identically overall: both groups responded to compliments around 24% of the time. This result is fascinating; it indicates that regardless of the composition of compliments, that is, categories of compliments

and the number of compliments given, these two very different groups of young men respond to compliments on FB at the same overall rate. The participants in the current study may place varying degrees of importance on different compliment topics, but the end result is the same: young Ecuadorian and Spanish men respond to compliments from other men on FB in approximately a quarter of instances.

In the next section I compare the response strategies of the two groups of participants to see whether the participants behave similarly, or if the end result, approximately equal response rates, is reached by different types of compliment responses, as is the situation with the overall response rate.

7.3 Forms of compliment responses

Turning to forms of compliment responses, recall that in the current study, I rely on Holmes's (1986) compliment response taxonomy, with a few modifications, as noted in Chapter 3.5.5. As a starting point, Table 7.2 gives an overview of the compliment response strategies deployed by both groups of participants. Table 7.2 does not include incidences of participants using 'like' on its own in response to a compliment, using and emoticon alone as a compliment response, nor does it include instances of non-acknowledgement of compliments, which was the most frequent (non) response.

Table 7. 2 Categories of compliment responses

Response type	Number of responses	
	Ecuador	Spain
Accept	74 (58.7%)	23 (47%)
Appreciation token	24 (32.4%)	7 (30.4%)
Agreeing utterance	27 (36.5%)	12 (52.2%)
Upgrade	18 (24%)	0
Downgrade/qualifying utterance	3	3

Return compliment	2	1
Reject	1 (.3%)	2 (4.1%)
Disagreeing utterance	1	1
Challenge sincerity	0	1
Deflect/Evade	51 (40.5%)	24 (49%)
Shift credit	4	5
Informative comment	12	8
Ignore	25	3
Legitimate evasion	8	4
Request reassurance/repetition	2	2
Make a joke	0	2

Table 7.2 shows that Ecuadorian men preferred acceptance as a compliment response strategy, followed by deflection and finally, rejection, which only occurred once. The situation was not the same for the Spanish participants who accepted and deflected compliments at a nearly equal rate: 47% and 49%, respectively.

Before continuing, it is crucial to highlight a few points about Table 7.2, as well as further data organization considerations that affect the result. There is no provision in Table 7.2 for emoticons, ‘likes’, and non-acknowledgement of compliments. There are multiple ways to organize data, which can affect its interpretation. I have excluded emoticons and ‘likes’ from Table 7.2 for the time being, in order to focus the discussion on the standard verbal, or in this case, written, forms of compliment responses without adding SNS-specific response mechanisms. I next include other types of non-traditional, SNS-specific, responses, and discuss the implications of these, which are affordances of new technology. I have not included laughter on its own as a compliment response, because I do not view it as one. Laughter occurring with a response is a supportive element (see Section 7.5).

The two groups of participants have not behaved in a dramatically different manner overall in terms of use of standard, written compliment

response patterns. The two groups both favor acceptance, followed by deflection and rejection. However, looking more closely at the overall high-level figures, the high-level figures for each larger response strategy have been reached by different approaches, that is, the two groups of participants used response sub-strategies in different ways to arrive at approximately similar results. For example, the Ecuadorian participants deflected or evaded compliments in 40.5% of written responses, while the Spanish participants did the same in 49% of written compliment responses. However, Ecuadorian men relied primarily on one response sub-strategy to evade compliments: ignore, which they did in 49% of evasions. Spanish men, on the other hand, did not clearly favor one evasion sub-strategy as clearly over another; the most any evasion sub-strategy occurred was 35% of the time. Spanish men did not prefer to ignore compliments as a deflection sub-strategy; this sub-strategy was only used in 13% of deflections, in sharp contrast to the Ecuadorian participants.

The participants behaved in different ways in terms of compliment acceptance sub-strategies as compared to deflection sub-strategies. Both groups of participants favored the use of appreciation tokens and agreeing utterances above any other strategy and the two groups of participants accepted compliments via appreciation tokens at approximately equal rates. There was one sub-strategy used by one group of participants and not the other: compliment upgrades used by the Ecuadorian male participants. Ecuadorian male participants used compliment upgrades as a sub-strategy in nearly a quarter of all instances of accepting a compliment while the Spanish men did not use this sub-strategy at all.

The use of compliment upgrades is a noteworthy result both because of the disparity in its use by the two groups of participants and because upgrading a compliment is not an unknown behavior in Spanish men; indeed, it was highlighted in previous compliment studies involving Spanish men, as noted by Lorenzo-Dus (2001:114, 117-18). It is interesting then that the Spanish male participants in the current study do not upgrade compliments at all, particularly as all the responses in the current study are in response to compliments from other men, an ideal opportunity to engage in humorous upgrades. The major difference between the current study and that conducted by Lorenzo-Dus (2001) lies in the methodology: Lorenzo-Dus used DCTs to collect her data, while the data for the current study consists of actual interactions that occurred on FB. The difference in methodology could account for the marked difference in behavior between the two groups. The fact that the Ecuadorian male participants use upgrades regularly when responding to compliments from other men suggests that it is not inappropriate or unheard of to use an upgrade as a compliment response sub-strategy in EcSp. The difference could be attributable to methodology, or it could also be due to the participants themselves and possible regional variation: the Spanish men in the current study and Lorenzo-Dus's (2001) are university-age men, but the participants for the current study are all from Andalusia, while the Spanish participants in Lorenzo-Dus's study were students at the University of Valencia (2001:111). This does not mean that all participants in Lorenzo-Dus's study were from Valencia, just that they were students there. There may be other reasons that some men in Lorenzo-Dus's study used upgrade as a compliment response, including a desire to show their witty selves or humorous side, or to test common ground and build rapport, as

Lorenzo-Dus suggests (p. 118). These reasons for using upgrades as compliment responses seem like they could apply to FB: many users are ‘friends’ with people who they may not know very well in their offline lives. In this way, users may deploy upgrades to paint a desired picture of themselves to their FB ‘friends’, as described by Lorenzo-Dus.

Return compliments were not used frequently by either group of participants. Lorenzo-Dus (2001) does not mention return compliments as a response strategy in her study, nor does Maíz-Arévalo (2012) in her contrastive study of responses in BrE and PenSp.

Next, I expand the discussion of compliment responses to include those responses unique to an online text-based format and not available in the same way in face-to-face interactions, namely emoticons and the ‘like’ function. Table 7.3 shows how the two groups of participants used emoticons and ‘likes’, in conjunction with the larger response categories of accept, reject, and evade. I have added ‘no acknowledgement’ here to show how responses stack up against non-responses.

Table 7. 3 Broad overview of compliment responses

	Ecuador	Spain
Responses	311 (59.4%)	92 (43.4%)
Accept	259 (83.3%)	66 (71.7%)
Written	74 (28.6%)	23 (34.8%)
Emoticon only	0	2 (3%)
‘Like’ only	185 (71.4%)	41 (62.1%)
Reject	1	2
Evade	51 (16.4%)	24 (25.5%)
No acknowledgement	213 (40.6%)	120 (56.6%)
Total	524	212

Table 7.3 shows that the Ecuadorian participants are more responsive to compliments overall; their rate of non-acknowledgement was approximately

15% lower than that for the Spanish male participants. The Ecuadorian men were also more likely to accept a compliment than Spanish men (83.3% vs. 71.7%). The total number of acceptances in Table 7.3 includes the use of 'like' or an emoticon on its own as a response. If emoticons and 'like' are excluded from analysis, and only written responses are examined, the Spanish male participants favor evasion as a response strategy, though only slightly: 24 evasions versus 23 acceptances. Adding emoticons and 'likes' into the analysis by viewing them as response sub-strategies, the proportion of acceptances for each group increases, but the Ecuadorian participants still accept compliments approximately ten times as often as the Spanish participants.

The difference between the compliment acceptance rate by the two groups of participants is still at approximately 10% (compared to Table 7.2). This is because the difference in use of 'like' as a compliment response carried the same difference as the overall difference in rate of acceptance: approximately 10%. There is one caveat with this, however: when calculating the proportion of 'likes' as part of acceptances, the difference between the two groups' use of 'like' is approximately 10%, when 'likes' are treated as an acceptance sub-strategy, as I am doing here. However, if 'likes' are classified as their own type of response strategy within their own category, 'likes' make up 59.5% of all responses for the Ecuadorian participants and 44.6% of responses for the Spanish male participants. This demonstrates a wider gap between the behavior of the two groups with respect to 'like'.

The differences in the overall use of 'like' show that researchers and readers must be cautious in classifying and presenting and interpreting findings. By presenting 'like' as a sub-strategy of acceptance, it is given a slightly less

important role in the overall presentation of compliment response results: the use of 'like' is an important point, but 'like' is contained to a sub-set of acceptance and is not treated as a separate response mechanism. If 'like' is taken on its own, it would occupy a more important place within a SNS-specific compliment response taxonomy, accounting for 59.5% of responses for the Ecuadorian participants. Table 7.4 presents a detailed look at 'like' for both groups of participants, which illustrates the importance of having a clearly methodology, taxonomy, and presentation of data.

Table 7. 4 Facets of 'like' as a stand-alone compliment response

		Ecuador	Spain
1	Total compliments	524	212
2	Total 'likes' of compliments	185	41
3	'Likes' vs. compliments	35.5% (185/524)	19.4% (41/211)
4	Total acceptances	259 (74+185)	66 (41+23+2)
5	Written acceptances	74	23
6	Emoticons	0	2
7	'Likes' vs. acceptances	71.4% (185/259)	62.1% (41/66)
8	Rejections	1	2
9	Deflections	51	24
10	Total written responses	126 (74+1+51)	49 (23+2+24)
11	Total all responses	311 (185+126)	92 (41+49+2)
12	'Likes' vs. all responses	59.5% (185/311)	44.6% (41/92)

Table 7.4 shows the performance of 'like' in three different ways: how many compliments received 'like' as a response with nothing further (Row 3), the proportion of acceptances that use 'like' as a sub-strategy (Row 7), and 'like' as a response strategy on its own (Row 12). As Table 7.4 makes clear, 'like' (and likewise, any response strategy) and its treatment can impact the overall picture of compliment responses in various ways. Row 7 shows how 'like' makes up the majority of acceptances for both Ecuadorian and Spanish participants when it is included as its own acceptance strategy. As demonstrated by Row 12, 'like' also constitutes the majority of all types of responses for the Ecuadorian participants

(excluding non-responses), but does not reach the same level for Spanish male participants. Row 3 shows that almost double the percentage of compliments in the Ecuadorian male data received a 'like' than compliments in the Spanish data.

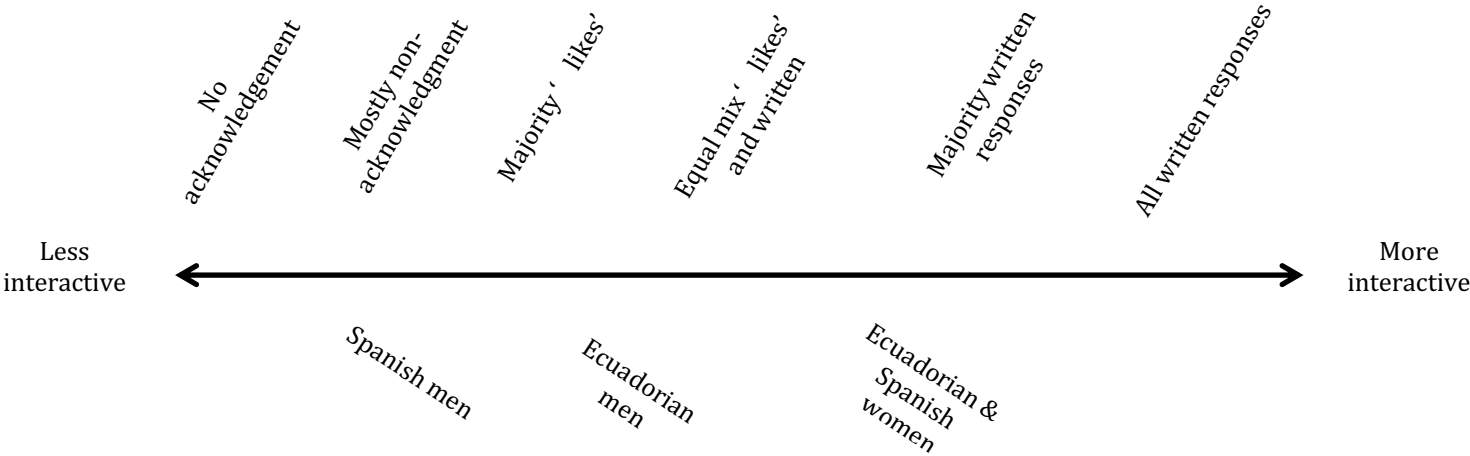
What these results demonstrate is a greater propensity on the part of the Ecuadorian participants to interact with their male friends on FB, even if it is only through a quick method, such as 'like'. The heavy reliance on 'like' by the Ecuadorian men is perhaps a facet of an apparent desire to present a masculine image in public and is a way to resolve the inner conflict of wanting to relate to, and support their male friends' face by responding to compliments, and at the same time not appear overly affectionate or effeminate (see Chapter 4.2.2).

This idea, however, does not seem to extend to the Spanish participants in the current study, who do not show any displays of hyper-masculinity, yet did not interact on FB with male friends as frequently as Ecuadorian men. In this respect, the Spanish men are behaving in a way more in accordance with expectations of male compliment behavior observed in past studies: men are less affectionate and do not engage in complimenting behavior as frequently as women do. While it is true that the Ecuadorian and Spanish male participants in this study did not interact with male friends as frequently as they did with their female friends, in terms of compliments, the situation is less black and white than this.

It is more beneficial to think of male and female compliment behavior on a spectrum, with men and women from different groups occupying their own place on a continuum. In the current study, the Ecuadorian and Spanish females who volunteered to participate have been excluded with focus being on their male counterparts, but based on rough numbers, we can place the female

participants together on one end of a compliment response continuum, until undertaking further analysis to determine their precise placements on the spectrum. Figure 7.1 gives an idea of how compliment responses should be viewed; rather than in the stark terms of women respond to compliments and men do not.

Figure 7. 1 Continuum of compliment response behavior



The placement of Ecuadorian and Spanish women on the continuum is just a guess, based on expectations formed from previous studies of compliment responses on FB among women (see Placencia et al., 2016); Eslami, Jabbari, and Kuo (2015); and Maíz-Arévalo (2013)).

As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, Spanish men used emoticons on their own as a response to a compliment, while Ecuadorian men did not. This did not happen frequently: only twice, but is surprising given the frequency with which Ecuadorian men used emoticons both in compliments and in other comments. It is unclear what it is about emoticons that caused the Ecuadorian male participants to refuse to use them as a compliment response, and, as discussed in Chapter 4 and below, not only did Ecuadorian male participants eschew

emoticons as compliment responses on their own, they also did not use emoticons as a supportive element to accompany compliment responses. A further point with respect to emoticons is their placement within the compliment response taxonomy in the current study.

Emoticons, when occurring without any accompanying text, are classified as a sub-response strategy to acceptance. The emoticons that have occurred here are smiling faces, which convey positive feelings, which is why they are included as an acceptance sub-strategy. It is possible that at some point, a researcher could observe a sad or frowning emoticon or emoji in response to a compliment. In such a scenario, I suggest creating a new sub-strategy of ‘negative emoticon’ under either of the larger strategies of reject or deflect/evade. The placement of the negative emoticon depends on the context of the photo in question, the compliment, and the response.

Holmes, in her 1986 study, situates a smile under appreciation token in her taxonomy (1986:492). In order to more effectively display the affordances of technology on compliment responses, I have placed emoticons (and ‘likes’) as independent sub-strategies. There is an argument to be made for classifying emoticons and ‘likes’ as types of appreciation tokens. However, in order to better demonstrate the difference between traditional, written (spoken) responses, I prefer to differentiate. Maíz-Arévalo (2013: 49) asserts that Holmes’s (1995) taxonomy does not account for paralinguistic cues, such as smiles, that frequently appear in compliment responses. This is slightly misleading because smiles appeared nearly a decade earlier in Holmes’s 1986 compliment response taxonomy, therefore it is not the case that Holmes does not contemplate paralinguistic cues.

Maíz-Arévalo (2013:65) classifies emoticons and 'likes' as implicit compliment responses. I too considered classifying these responses as implicit, but ultimately, while 'like' and emoticons are not explicit per se, nor are they precisely implicit: a reader does not have to infer much to understand their meanings. Furthermore, I do discuss implicit compliment responses, as I think that any implicit responses are adequately covered by various compliment response sub-strategies. Quite apart from that, compliments can be implicitly accepted, rejected, or deflected. A separate category for implicit compliment responses is not particularly illuminating as to the content of the response.

In this section I compared the compliment response results from the two groups of participants within a slightly modified version of Holmes's (1986) taxonomy of compliment responses. Overall, the Ecuadorian male participants were more likely to respond to compliments from men on FB than the Spanish male participants, whether via written responses or 'like', or, in two cases by Spanish men, with emoticons. With respect to written responses, both groups of participants favored accepting a compliment over other response strategies, though the Spanish participants did not favor acceptance by as wide a margin as the Ecuadorian male participants: deflect/evade closely followed acceptance. Both groups of participants used 'like' most frequently to accept a compliment, though the Ecuadorian male participants used 'like' more than their Spanish counterparts. In the next section, I discuss compliment responses observed in the current study, as compared to compliment topics.

7.4 Compliment response strategies across compliment topics

In Chapters 4 and 5, I presented the compliment responses for each group of participants as compared to the topics of compliments. This section compares and contrasts these findings for both groups of male participants. Tables 7.5 and 7.6 show the sub-strategies of compliment responses for both groups with respect to compliment topics. Emoticons and 'likes' on their own as a compliment response are not included in Tables 7.5 and 7.6, and I have not counted them towards the total for acceptances; I will deal with emoticons and 'likes' separately.

Table 7. 5 Compliment responses vis-à-vis compliment categories (Ecuador)

	Appearance	Possessions	Ability	Personality	Friendship	Children	Pets
Accept	24	5	28	12	2	1	-
Appreciation token	4 17%	-	18 64%	1	-	1	-
Agreeing utterance	10 42%	3 60%	7 25%	7 58%	-	-	-
Upgrade	8 33%	2 40%	3 11%	4 33%	1	-	-
Downgrade/qualifying utterance	1	-	1	1	-	-	-
Return compliment	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
Reject	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disagreeing utterance	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Challenge sincerity	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deflect/Evade	16	3	18	12	2	1	1
Shift credit	1	-	1	2	-	-	-
Informative comment	3 19%	2	2	5 42%	-	-	-
Ignore	10 63%	-	8 44%	4 33%	2	1	-
Legitimate evasion	2	1	4 22%	-	-	-	1
Request reassurance/repetition	-	-	2	-	-	-	-

Table 7. 6 Compliment responses vis-à-vis compliment categories (Spain)

	Appearance	Possessions	Ability	Personality	Friendship	Children	Pets
Accept	17	1	2	1	-	2	-
Appreciation token	7 41%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Agreeing utterance	8 47%	1	-	1	-	2	-
Upgrade	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Downgrade/qualifying utterance	2	-	1	-	-	-	-
Return compliment	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Reject	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
Disagreeing utterance	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Challenge sincerity	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deflect/Evade	15	-	4	5	-	-	-
Shift credit	4 27%	-	1	-	-	-	-
Informative comment	4 27%	-	1	3 60%	-	-	-
Ignore	3 20%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Legitimate evasion	1	-	2	1	-	-	-
Request reassurance/repetition	2 20%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Make a joke	1	-	-	1	-	-	-

Tables 7.5 and 7.6 are helpful because they clearly compare the preferred compliment response sub-strategies of both groups of participants with respect to topics of compliments. Overall, both groups of participants preferred to accept compliments, but used different sub-strategies to reach that result.

The two groups of participants are more likely to respond to certain categories of compliments: the Ecuadorian participants responded almost equally to compliments on ability and appearance, while the Spanish participants largely concentrated responses on appearance compliments. Tables 7.5 and 7.6

highlight how the two groups of male participants preferred or dis-preferred certain sub-strategies, depending on the compliment category. For example, the Ecuadorian male participants deployed appreciation tokens as an acceptance sub-strategy in the majority of acceptances of compliments on ability, while the Spanish male participants did not use appreciation tokens as a response to compliments on ability at all.

The Ecuadorian male participants' use of upgrade as a response sub-strategy stands in contrast against its complete non-use by the Spanish male participants (see Chapter 4.6.2.1). Not only did the Ecuadorian participants frequently use upgrade as an acceptance sub-strategy, but they used it across five of the seven categories of compliments. This, combined with the use of upgrade by Spanish men as observed by Lorenzo-Dus (2001), makes the non-use by Spanish men all the more surprising.

The most commonly used sub-strategy for accepting a compliment on appearance by both groups of participants was use of an agreeing utterance. This result is fascinating for the Spanish participants as Maíz-Arévalo's study of PenSp compliment responses on FB found that agreement was an infrequently deployed response sub-strategy (2013:54), accounting for only 2.8% of responses to compliments overall. Maíz-Arévalo (2013) attributes this to an unwillingness to violate modesty norms, however, she does not comment on how much agreement is used by the Spanish men in her study, so it is difficult to ascertain how Spanish men behaved in other compliment studies on FB. The fact that agreement is most heavily favored by the two geographically and socially diverse groups of participants in the current study calls into question the results of Maíz-Arévalo's (2013) study, though the differences may be explained by any

number of factors including research methodology, coding practices, and participants, to name but a few. Unfortunately, information about these factors is sparse in Maíz-Arévalo's (2013) study, which makes it impossible to explain this discrepancy.

Use of agreement as a sub-strategy for compliment acceptance was not only the most popular sub-strategy for compliments about appearance, but was also the most preferred sub-strategy for accepting compliments on possessions and personality by both groups of male participants. Spanish male participants did not respond to many compliments on ability overall, and only accepted two. Of the two compliments on ability that the Spanish male participants accepted, they did not use agreement as a sub-strategy. The Ecuadorian men deployed agreement to accept compliments on ability, but it was not their top sub-strategy. It is interesting that the Spanish male participants used agreement as a sub-strategy across a range of compliment categories, yet elected to not use agreement with respect to compliments on ability. This could be because Spanish men view its use in such scenarios as too large a violation of modesty maxims. That said, the number of compliment responses by Spanish men is quite low overall, therefore its absence could be due to the sample size.

When deflecting or evading compliments, the participants in the two groups behaved rather differently. When deflecting compliments on appearance, the Spanish participants used all sub-strategies available, with no particular sub-strategy occurring much more frequently than others. The Ecuadorian participants, on the other hand, preferred to ignore compliments on appearance as a method of deflection. Ignoring a compliment was a very popular sub-strategy for the Ecuadorian participants and was used in nearly every

compliment category. This sub-strategy was less popular with Spanish male participants: they only used this sub-strategy when deflecting a compliment on appearance and not in relation to any other compliment topic.

The most striking thing about compliment response sub-strategies is how overall, the male participants from both groups appear to be less affiliative and perhaps even more selfish than is typically seen in other studies on compliment responses. That is, the most preferred response strategy used by both groups is to accept a compliment and the most preferred sub-response strategy in both groups was to agree with the compliment, followed by upgrading the compliment by the Ecuadorian participants. There is some variation by topic, for example; while the Spanish participants favored accepting compliments overall, within the categories of ability and personality, they preferred to deflect compliments on ability and personality rather than accept them. The situation was not the same for Ecuadorian men: the Ecuadorian participants preferred to accept compliments rather than evade them in every category, save for compliments about pets.

It is tempting to suggest that Ecuadorian men are more egotistical than Spanish men, and are less affiliative in their behavior towards other men on FB with respect to responding to compliments. However, as with every aspect of the current study, there seems to be much more at play besides the results themselves. Ecuadorian men do not appear to respond much to compliments, and when they do, it seems to be in a rather self-congratulatory way, rather than a modest way. However, it is important to keep in mind the idea of presenting a very masculine image, which seems to be a recurring theme among some of the Ecuadorian male participants. Additionally, compliments and responses are

made up of more than the words, as explored in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. In the next section, I compare and contrast supportive elements used by the two groups of participants when responding to compliments in order to ascertain whether any further insight into Ecuadorian and Spanish male behavior on FB can be extracted.

7.5 Supportive elements in compliment responses

As with compliments, Ecuadorian and Spanish male participants in the current study used a variety of supportive elements along with compliment responses. As explained in Chapter 4, the Ecuadorian male participants used supportive elements in the majority of their compliment responses: only 11 (8.7%) written compliment responses given by Ecuadorian participants did not include any supportive elements. Chapter 5 showed that the situation was similar for Spanish male participants, who also added supportive elements to their written compliment responses, and had 6 (11.8%) compliment responses without any sort of supportive element accompanying them. Table 7.7 provides an abbreviated view of supportive elements used in compliment responses by the two groups of participants.

Table 7. 7 Supportive elements in compliment responses

	Ecuador	Spain
Form of address	59 (24%)	10 (10%)
'Like'	53 (21%)	21 (21%)
Laughter	53 (21%)	18 (18%)
Emoticon	-	28 (28%)
Repeated punctuation	47 (19%)	14 (14%)
Ellipsis marks	41	4
+ exclamation marks	2	1
+ question marks	2	-
Exclamation	2	9
Textual alteration	31 (13%)	8 (8%)

Alternative spelling	-	4
Capitals	13	-
Diminutive	-	1
Elongation	18	1
Repetition	-	2
<i>Besos</i> ('kisses')/ <i>abrazos</i> ('hugs')	4 (2%)	1 (1%)
Love	1	-
No supportive element	11 (4%)	6 (6%)
Total supportive elements	247	100

Table 7.7 shows that while both groups of male participants used supportive elements frequently in their compliment responses, the top choice for supportive elements by the two groups of participants was quite different. Ecuadorian men used forms of address as a supportive element most frequently overall in compliment responses (23.9% of all supportive elements) and emoticons were the supportive element of choice among the Spanish participants (28% of all supportive elements). The use of emoticons by the Spanish participants stands in stark contrast to the Ecuadorian participants, who did not use emoticons at all in their compliment responses. Both groups of participants used supportive elements most often when accepting compliments, though this is not unexpected as the majority of compliment responses in both groups were acceptances.

Apart from the absence of emoticons in the Ecuadorian male participants' compliment responses, the two groups behaved in a similar manner with respect to the use of supportive elements in compliment responses. Leaving aside emoticons, the supportive elements used most by both groups were laughter, forms of address, and 'like'. Interestingly, both groups used 'like' as a supportive element in 21% of compliment responses, and used laughter at similar rates: 21% of Ecuadorian compliment responses and 18% of Spanish compliment responses contained laughter. The difference in the use of forms of address by

the two groups is more substantial. Forms of address was the supportive element used most by the Ecuadorian participants, and while it was one of the top five supportive elements used by the Spanish participants, forms of address were not used nearly as frequently as by the Spanish male participants: 10% versus 24% of all supportive elements.

A further point of interest is the use of *besos* or *abrazos*, and other expressions of love as supportive elements in compliment responses. It has been discussed throughout the current study that the Ecuadorian men (both participants and their FB friends giving compliments) tend towards displays of overt masculinity, while the Spanish men have not made such displays in the current study. It is therefore surprising that the Ecuadorian participants used *besos* or *abrazos* four times as often than the Spanish participants in compliment responses. The Ecuadorian men only used this supportive element four times, but it nevertheless suggests a certain degree of affection among young Ecuadorian men that is unexpected and less prevalent among young Spanish men, in compliment responses at least.

As with supportive elements in compliments, the Ecuadorian male participants used punctuation and textual alteration as supportive elements in compliment responses frequently. Spanish participants used these supportive elements in compliment responses as well, but to a lesser extent than the Ecuadorian men. There are more nuanced differences in the behavior of the two groups of participants with respect to use of punctuation and textual alteration if we examine exactly how the participants used these supportive elements. For example, the Ecuadorian participants used ellipses, multiple exclamation marks, a combination of ellipses and exclamation marks, and a combination of ellipses

and question marks as supportive elements in compliment responses. However, the majority of occurrences of punctuation as a supportive element centered on the use of ellipsis alone: 87% of all supportive elements involving punctuation was the use of ellipsis. The situation was not the same for the Spanish participants: their punctuation of choice was multiple exclamation marks.

The behavior of the two groups of participants was different with respect to the use of textual alteration as a supportive element. The Ecuadorian participants used textual alteration when replying to compliments 5% more often than the Spanish participants. There was only one form of textual alteration that the two groups both used: elongation. The Ecuadorian male participants used elongation in the majority of instances of textual alteration in compliment responses, while the Spanish male participants only used this form once. The Spanish participants used alternative spellings, diminutives, and repetition as supportive elements, while the Ecuadorian participants did not use any of these forms in their compliment responses. Likewise, the Ecuadorian male participants used capital letters as a form of textual alteration in compliment responses and the Spanish male participants did not.

Recall from Chapters 4 and 5 that Ecuadorian and Spanish men used supportive elements frequently when giving compliments, and as is the case with supportive elements in compliment responses, Spanish and Ecuadorian men used more supportive elements than there were compliments, meaning some compliments were accompanied by multiple supportive elements. There were more combinations of supportive elements used in compliments than in compliment responses, such as multiple forms textual alteration (see Table 4.14, for example). There are some interesting similarities and differences between

the use of supportive elements in compliments and compliment responses. For example, Ecuadorian men used forms of address as a supportive element in 24% of compliments and compliment responses. The Spanish men behaved identically: forms of address constituted 10% of supportive elements in Spanish male compliments and compliment responses. Ecuadorian men used laughter as a supportive element at similar rates in both compliments and compliment responses. Spanish men, however, used laughter twice as much as a supportive element in compliment responses. This suggests that Spanish men use laughter not only as a supportive element in compliment responses, but also a strategy for minimizing self-praise: accompanying a written compliment response with laughter sends a message that they do not take themselves or the praise too seriously. The Ecuadorian participants' use of laughter equally in compliments and compliment responses suggests that Ecuadorian men are not as concerned with minimizing self-praise in compliment responses, or at least if they are, they do not use laughter to achieve this. The fact that Ecuadorian men use upgrades frequently in compliment responses lends credibility to the idea that Ecuadorian men are not concerned with minimizing self-praise.

Spanish men used textual alteration as a supportive element most frequently in compliments, and Ecuadorian men used repeated punctuation most often in compliments. While textual alteration and repeated punctuation featured as supportive elements in compliment responses, they were much less prominent, and, as already explored, different variations of textual alteration and repeated punctuation featured more often in compliment responses than in compliments. Both groups of men used interjections as supportive elements in compliments, but neither used interjections in compliment responses. This

omission suggests that some forms of supportive elements may be less appropriate for compliment responses than for compliments.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that neither Ecuadorian nor Spanish men give written responses to compliments very frequently. Overall, the two groups of participants behaved almost identically in that both gave written responses at nearly identical rates. From this high-level similarity, the two groups of participants diverged on other issues, such as rates of accepting, rejecting, or evading compliments, as well as the frequency of not responding to compliments.

In terms of written compliment responses, the Ecuadorian male participants accepted compliments at a higher rate overall than the Spanish male participants. A notable difference in methods for accepting compliments emerged here, with the Ecuadorian men frequently upgrading compliments, while Spanish men did not do this at all in response to compliments from men on FB. This result is contrary to what has been previously observed behavior of Spanish men with respect to compliment responses on FB (see Maíz-Arévalo, 2013 and Lorenzo-Dus, 2001). Despite this difference, both groups of participants behaved similarly within the larger response strategy of accepting compliments: both groups of participants used appreciation tokens at similar rates.

Both groups of participants used supportive elements frequently along with their compliment responses, their overall behavior was nearly identical. However, the behavior of the participants diverged in terms of which supportive

elements each group preferred to use with compliment responses. As was the case with the Ecuadorian male participants using upgrades as a compliment acceptance sub-strategy and Spanish men not using this strategy at all, Spanish men used emoticons as a supportive element in compliment responses while the Ecuadorian male participants did not use emoticons at all. Both groups used 'like' as a supportive element at identical rates.

The overall picture of Ecuadorian and Spanish male compliment response behavior is that of two separate strands that diverge and come back together and then separate at various points. These divergences and convergences inform our view of the values held by young Ecuadorian and Spanish men. Overall, neither group places a heavy emphasis on giving written responses to compliments received from men on FB, but when accounting for other methods of responding to compliments such as 'like' or emoticons, Ecuadorian men appear to be more concerned with giving some sort of response, be it written or via a technological affordance such as 'like', than the Spanish men.

The reasons for this could be down to individuals: the Ecuadorian participants may be the types of men who are highly interactive on FB and the Spanish men are not. However, given the other elements at play here such as overall activity on FB (e.g., comments and the number of photos in the study) indicate, the Spanish male participants are not significantly fewer active users of FB than the Ecuadorian male participants. Therefore, the likely conclusion is that Ecuadorian men feel a greater need to tend to their male friends' face needs by responding to, or acknowledging in some way, their compliments on FB.

Chapter 8

CONCLUSION

This study has provided a regional variational pragmatics (see Schneider and Barron, 2008) view of male-male complimenting behavior on FB. As an intralinguistic comparative study, it takes into account various macro social factors such as region, by contrasting participants from Quito, Ecuador, and Andalusia, Spain. Other macro social factors considered include sex and age: study participants were limited to men within an age range of 18-26 years. Microsocial factors such as social distance and the relationship between participants are not considered in this study.

8.1 Contribution to compliment study methodologies

This thesis represents an example of use of the field method of study, adapted to an online context (cf. Jucker, 2009; Wolfson and Manes, 1981). Following on from Placencia and Lower's strategy for adapting the field method to SNSs, namely FB (2013), this study contributes to the development of studying naturally occurring, asynchronous digital data through its use of technology. The methodology in the current study draws on those deployed in previous studies of compliments on FB (see Placencia and Lower, 2013; Placencia et. al, 2016), and enhances them, by streamlining data gathering and data coding. Despite help from technology, this study has shown that on the Internet, specifically FB, there exists an almost infinite data pool. Limiting and managing naturally occurring data collected from online contexts is essential. Having clear parameters for both study participants and which data are included does this.

8.2 Men as relevant subjects in compliments studies

This study focused on compliment behavior among men because until now, little attention has been paid specifically to how men give and receive compliments to each other, both in face-to-face and online contexts. Previous studies of compliments imply that men are not worth studying, largely because they do not engage in much complimenting behavior, and compliments among men are limited to topics such as ability and possessions.

While it is true that men do not engage in as much complimenting behavior as women typically do (see Chapters 4 and 5), this study has demonstrated how misguided such notions are, and shows repeatedly that male complimenting behavior is worth studying. Men give compliments to other men, and they also respond to compliments. Perhaps most importantly, Ecuadorian and Spanish men use compliments in different ways than women. Women from a variety of languages and cultures have been found to give compliments and respond to compliments in a formulaic manner, whether this is in a face-to-face context or in an online setting. Men also behave in a formulaic manner, but to a different extent and in different ways than women.

8.3 Ecuadorian male compliment behavior

In this study, Ecuadorian men gave compliments on a variety of topics, focusing praise most heavily on ability and appearance, though the preference for compliment topics can shift, depending on who the participants are, and the composition of their photos, as shown here with one particular participant (see Chapter 4). A participant who is an outlier in terms of the quantity and composition of photos can impact the results in a study, as demonstrated here.

However, an outlier does not necessarily change all aspects of results, therefore deciding whether or not to exclude outlier participants is a methodological question; all participants have been included here in order to give a full and accurate picture of how a range of Ecuadorian men behave.

Ecuadorian men engaged a large variety of syntactic patterns to realize compliments; the greatest variety of syntactic patterns were deployed with respect to compliments on ability. Overall however, Ecuadorian men favored simplified syntactic patterns for giving compliments, which were typically made up of one or two words and relied heavily on a small set of adjectives and adverbs to express the majority of compliments, across compliment categories.

Supportive elements occurred frequently in compliments among young Ecuadorian men. These supportive elements in compliments and responses on FB are not the same as those described by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), but instead include such elements as using repeated punctuation, nominal forms of address, textual alteration such as letter elongation or capitalization, textual representations of laughter, and frequent use of FB's 'like' function. Supportive elements of these forms are frequently used in digital contexts, and in many cases, appeared to replicate spoken communication (see Yus, 2011 for a discussion of oralized written texts). These supportive elements were used so often in compliments and responses among Ecuadorians on FB that it was more unusual to have no supportive moves. Many compliments and responses were accompanied by a variety of supportive moves used together, as opposed to just one.

The majority of compliments given to the Ecuadorian participants here received no response, which was also noted in compliment responses on FB

among American women (see Placencia et al., 2016). The second most common type of compliment response given by Ecuadorian participants was via the 'like' a function, a FB-specific feature. The most common type of written response to a compliment by Ecuadorian participants was to accept the compliment. Several acceptances used the sub-strategy of compliment upgrade, which has been observed among Spanish men as well (see Lorenzo-Dus, 2001).

8.4 Spanish male compliment behavior

As in compliment studies focused on women, the majority of compliments given to Spanish men related to appearance, though other topics such as ability and personality, received compliments as well (see Chapter 5).

Spanish men deployed a variety of syntactic patterns when giving compliments, many of those relying on adjectives to convey a positive message. The most preferred adjective by Spanish men was *guapo* ('handsome'), which is unsurprising as the majority of Spanish male compliments related to appearance. In addition to this display of rather formulaic behavior, Spanish men used implicit compliments more than any other syntactic pattern, demonstrating that despite a heavy reliance on one adjective, Spanish men also showed that they could be creative when giving compliments.

Spanish men used supportive elements frequently when complimenting other men. The supportive moves most preferred by Spanish men in giving compliments were textual alteration and repeated punctuation.

The results of compliment response studies online are fairly mixed with some reporting a high response rate, and others noting a very low response rate (see Placencia and Lower, 2017). Consistent with the findings of Placencia et al.,

2016, Spanish participants responded to compliments infrequently with traditional written responses. When Spanish men responded to compliments from other men, the most preferred form was to deflect or evade a compliment, followed closely by accepting a compliment. This result does not coincide with Maíz-Arevalo (2013), in which acceptance was the preferred strategy for compliment responses on FB among Spaniards.

In past studies, Spanish men have been shown to frequently upgrade compliments as a form of response to compliments from women (see Lorenzo-Dus, 2001; and Maíz-Arévalo, 2013). In the current study, however, Spanish men never used upgrade as a compliment response strategy. The reason for its absence is likely due to the composition of participants of the current study: all men. Past studies noted the use of upgrades in compliments from women to men. As with compliments, Spanish men used supportive elements regularly in compliment responses, favoring emoticons and FB's 'like' function.

8.5 Comparison of Ecuadorian and Spanish male complimenting behavior

On the whole, Ecuadorian men engaged with each other to a greater degree than did Spanish men on FB: they posted more photos to FB, and made more comments, and used FB's 'like' function more than their Spanish counterparts.

Ecuadorian men gave the majority of compliments on ability, but the proportion of compliments on appearance was not significantly smaller than that for compliments on ability (see Chapter 4). Spanish men, on the other hand, gave the vast majority of compliments on appearance, with other topics lagging far behind (see Chapter 5).

Both groups of men primarily use adjectives to carry the positive semantic weight of their compliments, but there is surprisingly little overlap in the chosen adjectives, with Ecuadorian men favoring *bueno* ('good') and Spanish men relying most heavily on *guapo* ('handsome') (see Chapter 6). Ecuadorian men used the adverb *bien* ('good') on its own frequently across topics of compliments, while Spanish men did so far less often.

Analyzing compliments from the perspective of personal focus provides a different view of male behavior on FB. Herbert (1990) suggests that men compliment from a less personal, third person focus. The overall results of the current study confirm this notion: both Ecuadorian and Spanish men gave the majority of compliments from a third person focus (see Chapter 6). However, the use of supportive elements appears to be an attempt to add affect to more distant forms of compliments, particularly by Ecuadorian men.

Use of supportive elements appears to be a crucial component of giving compliments on FB for both Ecuadorian and Spanish men, to such an extent that an absence of supportive elements in a compliment stands out.

Neither Ecuadorian nor Spanish men give traditional written responses to compliments very frequently. Overall, the two groups of participants behaved almost identically in that both gave written responses at nearly the same rate. From this high-level similarity, the two groups of participants diverged on other issues, such as rates of accepting, rejecting, or evading compliments, as well as the frequency of not responding to compliments at all.

With respect to the compliment response strategies deployed, Ecuadorian male participants accepted compliments at a higher rate overall than Spanish male participants. The biggest discrepancy in strategies for accepting

compliments is visible in the use of upgrades by Ecuadorian men, and Spanish men completely eschewing this sub-strategy, contrary to previous findings relating to Spanish male compliment responses (see Maíz-Arévalo, 2013 and Lorenzo-Dus, 2001).

Both groups of participants used supportive elements frequently in compliment responses but diverged in terms of choice of preferred supportive element. Spanish men used emoticons as a supportive element in compliment responses while the Ecuadorian male participants did not use emoticons at all. Both groups used 'like' as a supportive element in compliment responses at identical rates.

The overall picture of Ecuadorian and Spanish male compliment response behavior is that of two separate strands that diverge and come back together at various points. These divergences and convergences inform a view of the values held by young Ecuadorian and Spanish men. Overall, neither group places a heavy emphasis on giving written responses to compliments received from men on FB, but when accounting for other methods of responding to compliments such as 'like' or emoticons, Ecuadorian men appear to be more concerned with giving some sort of response, be it written or via a technological affordance such as 'like', than the Spanish men.

8.6 Contribution of current study to compliment studies

Where, then, do the results of this study on male-male compliments fit in with other compliment studies, particularly those conducted on FB, those focused on male behavior, and those focused on Spanish speakers? In short, because there is very little research on Ecuadorian and Spanish male

compliments and responses, these two groups currently occupy their own space within compliment research, almost exclusively. There is not a complete absence of research into male compliment behavior; as discussed in Chapter 2 there are small snippets of information available to piece together about male compliment behavior from previous studies, but nothing gives a clear picture, particular with respect to male-male activity, and not relating to Ecuadorian and Spanish men.

Based on previous studies of compliments, men were not expected to give many compliments to each other at all, and particularly not compliments on appearance. This turned out to not be the case with either group of men: the large majority of compliments among Spanish men focused on appearance, and Ecuadorian men heavily focused on appearance as well, though to a lesser degree. What has become clear through the results of this study is that both groups of men, while not complimenting each other as frequently as women, do compliment each other and at times express considerable affection through compliments and additional supportive elements.

8.7 Limitations of the current study and directions for future research

This study focused on men ranging in age from 18-25 hailing from Quito, Ecuador, and Andalusia, Spain. To gather participants, I relied on the people being truthful both in revealing their ages and geographic locations. In analyzing the data, I found a handful of participants from both groups who did not fit the parameters and had to exclude them, showing that people are not always reliable in how they present themselves. It may be the case that some participants are not from the desired age range or geographic location, which could impact the results.

A further limitation of the current study is its relatively narrow focus, both with respect to the participants (men, aged 18-26) and the geographic regions (Quito, Ecuador, and Andalusia, Spain). This may limit its wider applicability. Finally, in analyzing compliments, I narrowed the focus to the utterance that most clearly conveyed that positive message, rather than accounting for all combinations of compliment strategies in use. This narrows the focus of compliment analysis.

With respect to future research, this study has alluded to a good deal of possible directions for future research. A comparative study of the types of compliments given by men and women to men would demonstrate whether men differ significantly in the importance that they place on various topics of compliments. Indeed, a full comparison of the behavior of both sexes in both groups would provide a more definitive answer as to whether male behavior deviates from expected norms, or whether patterns of behavior are described by macrosocial factors such as region, and methodological considerations, such as location of the study (in this case, FB).

Technology moves at such a rapid rate, conducting a similar study with more recent data would show how the behavior observed here has changed (if at all). That is, with newer social media platforms, such as Instagram, do Ecuadorian and Spanish men still use FB to the same extent as at the time data for the current study were gathered? Or, has their use of FB dried up?

The use of oralized written text has been considered in a variety of studies on social media, but to my knowledge, has not been considered in relation to compliments in the same way as the current study. There seems to be little cohesion with respect to how to treat what I call supportive elements in

compliment studies. The use of supportive moves, following Blum-Kulka et al. (1999), has been mentioned in other studies of compliments on FB (cf. Placencia and Lower, 2013). A study on compliments on SNSs that primarily focuses on the form and function of supportive elements would shed more light into this phenomenon.

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Database extract

Database extract

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Appendix B

Introductory letter to potential participants

Hola,

Soy Amanda Lower y soy estudiante de doctorado. Estoy haciendo mi doctorado en Londres en el área de lingüística hispánica, centrándome en la cortesía, más específicamente, los cumplidos. Necesito empezar a recoger los datos para mi tesis, e intentaré a hacerlo en Facebook.

Voy a hacer una comparación entre los cumplidos en Facebook del español peninsular, y del español ecuatoriano. Lo que quisiere es hacer 'amigos' en Facebook en los dos países para comparar el uso de la lengua en Facebook en cuanto a los cumplidos. Observaré los perfiles de los participantes para ver ejemplos de cumplidos, y como la gente responde a los cumplidos. Quizás pediré a los participantes completar/rellenar un cuestionario al final del estudio, pero todavía no sé definitivamente. Si lo hago, sería lo más breve posible!

En mi tesis doctoral, no usaré nombres; asignaré un código alfanumérico a cada participante. La única información que aparecerá en mi tesis sobre los participantes será sexo, edad, lugar, y quizás nivel de educación. Además, si uso cualquier foto en mi tesis para dar un ejemplo, usaré Photoshop para deformar la(s) cara(s) en la foto y proteger la privacidad de los participantes.

Si no le importa, me gustaría observar su perfil para usarlo en mi proyecto. Si está de acuerdo, ¿me puede añadir como amiga? Así puedo empezar a recoger los datos para mi estudio. Busco a gente entre 18 y 30 años para participar.

Lo siento por este contacto bastante al azar. Si tiene cualquier pregunta, no dude en contactarme.

Saludos,

Amanda Lower

This translates to the following:

Hello,

I am Amanda Lower and I am a doctorate student. I am doing my PhD in London about Hispanic linguistics, focusing on courtesy, more specifically, on compliments. I need to start to gather data for my thesis and I'm going to try to do it on Facebook.

I will do a comparison between compliments on Facebook in peninsular Spanish and Ecuadorian Spanish. What I would like to do is make 'friends' on Facebook in the two countries to compare usage of Facebook in terms of compliments. I will observe the profiles of the participants to see

examples of compliments, y how people respond to compliments. I may ask participants to fill in a questionnaire at the end of the study, but I am still not certain about this. If I do this, it will be as short as possible!

In my doctoral thesis, I will not use names; I will assign an alphanumeric code to each participant. The only information that will appear in my thesis about the participants will be sex, age, location, and perhaps level of education. Furthermore, if I use any photo in my thesis to give an example, I will use Photoshop to obscure the face(s) in the photo.

If you do not mind, I would like to observe your profile and perhaps use it in my project. If you agree, could you please add me as a friend? Then I can start with my data collection. I am looking for people between 18 and 30 years old to participate.

My apologies for this seemingly random contact. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

Amanda Lower

Appendix C

Participation flyer

Invitación a participar en un estudio lingüístico

¿Estás en Facebook? ¿Eres quiteño/a? ¿Tienes entre 18 y 26 años de edad?

Si tu respuesta es sí a estas preguntas, quisiera invitarte a participar en un estudio lingüístico sobre Facebook que estoy haciendo como parte de mi doctorado en la Universidad de Londres (Birkbeck), Inglaterra (<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/spanish/current-students/studresearch>)

¿QUÉ VAS A
HACER EN
TU
PROYECTO?

El tema de mi proyecto es cómo la gente joven en Quito (y Andalucía) usa Facebook, centrándome en la comunicación 'verbal'. No será un análisis de la gente sino de cómo se relacionan. Por ejemplo, quiero investigar cómo los amigos en Facebook responden a noticias de los usuarios (ej. cómo se felicitan, cómo hacen cumplidos o cómo hacen bromas). Mi papel será el de observar las interacciones y no de participar como 'amiga'. Tampoco se trata de juzgar el uso de la lengua sino de observarlo e identificar patrones.

¿PERO CÓMO VAS
A PROTEGER MI
IDENTIDAD?

Siguiendo las normas internacionales y de mi Universidad sobre cuestiones éticas en la investigación, se garantiza completo anonimato a los participantes. Para esto, reemplazaré los nombres de los participantes con un código numérico (ej. hombre 1, hombre 2, etc.; mujer 1, mujer 2, etc.). Igualmente los amigos de los participantes aparecerán simplemente como 'hombre' o 'mujer'. La única información que aparecerá en mi tesis sobre los participantes será sexo, edad, lugar, y quizás nivel de educación.

Si quieres participar, solamente necesitas agregarme como 'amiga' en tu cuenta de Facebook

¿QUÉ TENGO QUE
HACER?

Amanda Lower (Birkbeck Investigadora)
alower01@mail.bbk.ac.uk

Quizás pediré a los participantes completar un cuestionario al final del estudio pero si esto sucede, será algo muy breve.

Además, si te es posible, te agradecería que envíes este pdf a amigos/as.

ME INTERESA
PARTICIPAR, PERO
TENGO ALGUNAS

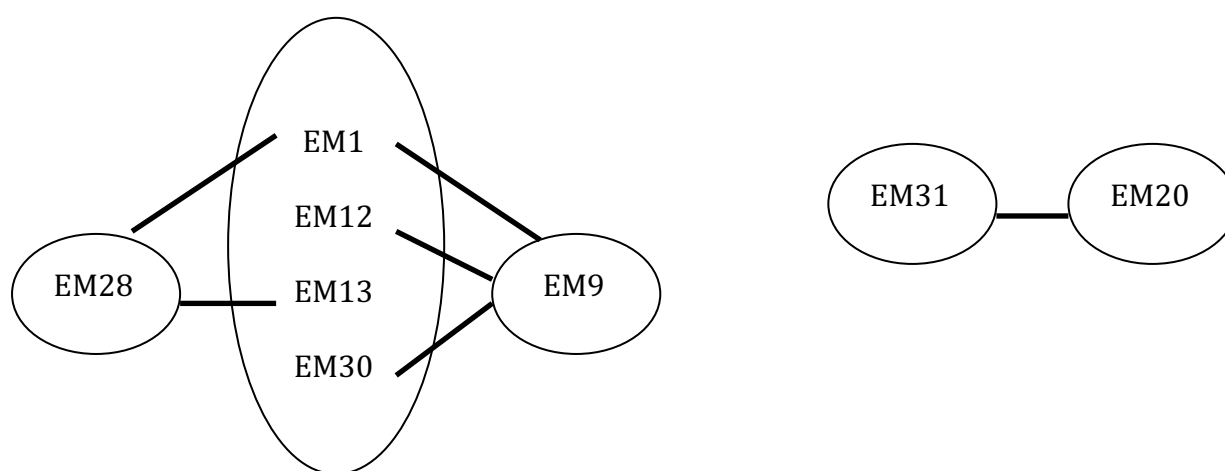
¡Ningún problema! Me puedes escribir a mi correo electrónico con cualquier pregunta o duda.

¡MUCHAS GRACIAS DESDE YA POR TODA TU AYUDA!



Appendix D

Ecuadorian friendship networks



Appendix E

Comparison of supportive elements with EM26 included and excluded

Table 4.10(a) Supportive elements vis-à-vis syntactic patterns (with and without EM26)

	Laughter	No EM26	Interjection	No EM26	Emoticon	No EM26	Form of Address	No EM26	Abrazos	No EM26	Textual Deformation	No EM26	Punctuation	No EM26	Total	No EM26
A	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	2	3	3
B	13	8	1	1	-	-	18	9	-	-	14	11	21	12	67	41
D	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	3	1
E	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	1	1	1	4	2
F	26	21	-	-	1	1	26	18	3	1	17	14	32	25	106	81
G	44	30	1	-	1	1	47	25	-	-	59	34	64	32	215	121
I	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	3	2	1	-	8	2
J	15	12	-	-	1	1	17	13	1	1	16	13	21	14	72	55
L	10	8	2	2	1	-	16	7	-	-	12	9	20	12	61	38
P	5	5	-	-	-	-	5	4	-	-	4	3	4	4	18	16
Q	5	2	1	1	2	1	11	7	-	-	6	5	10	6	36	23
R	9	6	-	-	-	-	12	8	1	1	17	10	24	13	64	39
S	24	19	-	-	-	-	32	25	2	1	31	28	37	25	126	98
U	3	2	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	4	3	4	2	14	9
	156	113	5	4	6	4	190	117	7	4	186	134	243	149	792	525

Table 4.11(a) No supportive elements

	Appearance		Possessions		Ability		Personality		Friendship		Children		Pets		Total	
		No EM26		No EM26		No EM26		No EM26		No EM26		No Em26		No EM26		No EM26
B	3	3	-	-	3	1	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	8	6
E	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
F	1	1	1	1	3	1	-	-	3	3	-	-	-	-	8	6
G	4	2	-	-	8	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	13	4
I	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
J	1	0	-	-	12	3	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	14	4
L	1	1	-	-	2	-	1	1	2	2	-	-	2	2	8	6
O	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	1
P	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	3	3
Q	-	-	-	-	5	3	2	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	8	6
R	1	1	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	5	4

S	8	7	2	1	5	2	1	1	1	1	-		-		17	12
U	1	1	1	1	-		-		-		-		-		2	2
Total	22	18	6	5	41	13	5	5	11	11	2	2	3	3	90 17.2%	577 16.5%